

Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology

*Mystery
Animals
of
Japan*

**Also:
ESP in Animals**



**The Government
Connection.**

Issue 20.

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"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets"
(Goethe)

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ANIMALS & MEN

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THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY.....ARE NOT DONE

Dear Friends,

It is well over six months since the last issue of this magazine arrived on your doorstep. Unfortunately since issue 19 various members of the Editorial team have been otherwise occupied – mainly due to financial considerations and the necessity of having to earn a living, but now the short term problems which have beset us over much of this year appear to be over and we are able to get on with the business at hand.

It is all change at the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Thanks to generous donations by Wolfgang Schmidt and Joyce Howarth we have now acquired new video and printing equipment. We are now able to work on several projects that we have been planning for several years.

* The chronicles of our Puerto Rico and Mexico expedition of 1998 will soon be available both as a book and a video.

* The results of our investigation into the south Devon dolphin mutilations will also be available on video within the next few months.

* The Owlman film will be finished very soon and available from April. It is being premiered at the 2000 UnConvention at the Commonwealth Institute.

* We are planning a major expedition for next year and will announce details in the next issue.

Because of a dispute with Domra publications of Corby we are no longer associated with them and my books which were published by them are temporarily out of print. However the following titles will be reissued by the CFZ next year:

* The Owlman and Others (Reprint of first edition rather than the substandard Domra edition)

* Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry (Revised second Edition)

* The Rising of the Moon (Revised second edition)

and we will also be issuing two new books: *Only Fools and Goatsuckers – the hunt for the Chupacabra*, and *The Blackdown Mystery*.

Because of financial strictures, but mostly because of lack of time there will not be a Yearbook for the year 2000 but we hope to recommence production for the following year. Unfortunately we are no longer able to print the monthly newsletters because of our other commitments and so outstanding subscriptions for newsletters will be added on to your subscription to this magazine.

At the moment we are not sure what is happening to our sister magazine *The Goblin Universe*. We hope to be able to resume publication next year, and there is also a possibility that it will be transferred to a different publisher. For the moment we would just ask for your patience!

Also next year, we are proud to announce the return of the Crypto Shop – bigger and better than ever! Together with Danish cryptozoologist Erik Sorenson we intend to be able to offer the biggest and best selection of second hand cryptozoology books in the world!

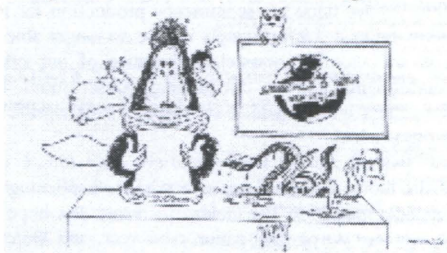
Finally, we would like to both apologise and thank our good friend John Tait who designed both this cover and the last. He has given the magazine a facelift which will take us proudly into the new Millenium and we were crass enough to omit his name from the last issue. Many apologies.

Slainte
Jon Downes



NEWSFILE

compiled and edited by the
boys from the old brigade



CONSERVATION

RELEASE THE BATS

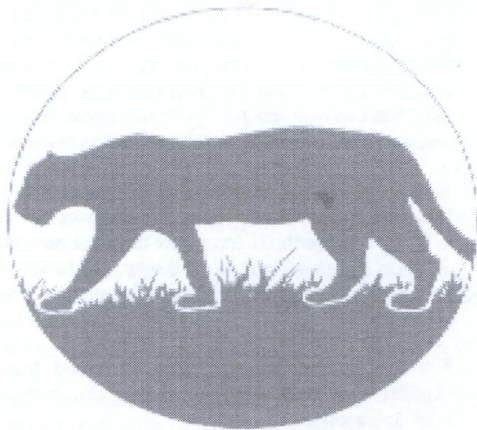
According to the *Sunday Times*, on the 23 May 1999 there is a disturbing and illegal trade in the meat of protected bat species in British shops and restaurants. "Despite international laws outlawing the trade in bats or their consumption for food in Europe, *The Sunday Times* found fruit bats openly on sale in British shops and restaurants last week.

One reporter was offered a lump of smoked bat at a shop in south London. A worker at a cash-and-carry in Brixton pulled the meat from a box and wrapped it in brown paper. He boasted the meat was imported from Ghana and charged £1.86 for the hand-sized portion. Analysis of the meat by independent scientists found that the bones within it matched those of fruit bat samples. The meat was virtually rancid and partly decomposed. It was infested with foreign beetle larvae."

The newspaper continued with revelations that: "In Birmingham, a reporter who posed as a meat trader was promised bats 'within a few days' by a vendor at the city's daily meat market. Another reporter was offered bat meals in a cafe off the Old Kent Road in southeast London. The reporter asked a waiter in the African restaurant if bat was being served and was offered a curry, served with vegetables and rice."

Tony Hutson, from the Bat Conservation Trust, said: "This is the first time we have heard of bat meat being openly sold in Britain. It is obviously a serious concern for us."

MYSTERY CATS



USA

New Hampshire

Bradford, - Two construction workers are the latest to spot what they say was a mountain lion, although wildlife biologists maintain that the animals disappeared from New England at the turn of the century. Still, about a half dozen people every year in New Hampshire call Fish and Game to say they have seen a mountain lion. None of the sightings have been confirmed, said Mark Ellingwood, a wildlife biologist. *USA TODAY*- Monday, July 19, 1999

Michigan

A Green Oak Township family's introduction to their new home included sighting what police said may have been a panther.

Darlene Wiljanen noticed the black cat-like creature about 9:15 a.m. at the back of the family's 5-acre property, near a wooded area across from Island Lake Recreation Area. After watching it prowl for several minutes, she got the family's video camera and taped the animal for three or four minutes, said her husband, Matt Wiljanen.

"I don't know what a panther looks like, but this animal looked too darn big to be a cat," he said.

Matt Wiljanen described the animal as about 4-feet [sic] long, not including its tail, and about 1 1/2- to 2-feet [sic] tall. It looked like a shorthaired black cat, but about the size of a bobcat. It seemed to be stalking something, he said. After videotaping the animal, Darlene Wiljanen called Green Oak Township Police. Police called the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Fish and Wildlife Service, who sent officers to investigate the incident. They found tracks and said they were too large to be those of a housecat. The Wiljanens moved to their home on Bishop Road a week before. *"On the first day, our furnace went out,"* he said. *"Yesterday it was the panther. What next?"* *The Ann Arbor News* Saturday, April 3, 1999

CANADA

EDITOR'S NOTE: although there is no doubt that *f.concolor* does exist in Canada, this story from the Toronto Globe and Mail 19 June 1999 caught our eye.....

Claiming to have seen a cougar in Ontario was once akin to confessing to drinking bouts with an invisible rabbit. Now, with a simple stoop-and-scoop manoeuvre, Lil Anderson has changed all that. Ms. Anderson, a resource management technician with Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources, has the poop on the big cat. Found on a trapline near Kenora last year, the fecal matter "is the first solid or semi-solid piece of proof we've had for the cougar's existence," says wildlife biologist Neil Dawson. Listed as an endangered species and protected against hunting, the eastern cougar was supposed to have been driven out of the province during the past century. "There are still a lot of cougar skeptics out there," Mr. Dawson concedes. "But with Lil's finding, I think the tide is turning."

Cougars, also called pumas, mountain lions and panthers, once roamed throughout much of North America. Nearly two metres long and weighing as much as 60 kilograms, the big tan-coloured cats became increasingly scarce as forests gave way to farms and they were persecuted as livestock killers. Ontario's last known cougar was shot near

Creemore, north of Toronto, in 1884. Since then, at least 1,000 cougar sightings have been reported in the province, all without definite proof of the animal's existence--until last year, when Ms. Anderson found herself hot on the trail of the mysterious cat. Responding to a call about possible cougar tracks northeast of Kenora, Ms. Anderson and Natural Resources technician Rob Moorley found another set of tracks. "They were so fresh, we were expecting a close encounter of the furred kind," Ms. Anderson says.

They soon found the crucial evidence, still unfrozen despite the -15°C temperature. Ms. Anderson scooped up the deposit - technically known as scat - and shipped it to the Edmonton forensic laboratory of Alberta's Natural Resources Service. There, forensic biologist Tom Packer subjected the stool to thin-layer chromatography, a process that separates the chemicals found in an animal's bile salts into a pattern specific to individual species. He compared the results with scat obtained from an Alberta cougar. The patterns matched.

On the surface, the finding is good news. Top predators are a sign of a healthy environment, and should indicate the existence of both good habitat and abundant prey. On the other hand, as loggers, hunters and campers push into previously untracked wilderness, there may simply be more pressure on the cougar's habitat, and greater opportunities to catch sight of the beast.

Reliable cougar sightings have ranged from Manitoba to Quebec borders, and from Hearst in the north to Bracebridge and Pembroke in the south. For Ms. Anderson's part, she is still on the case. The next time cougar scat falls in the forest, she hopes someone will notice and call the ministry. *"My big goal is to see and photograph a cougar,"* she says.

UK

EDITOR'S NOTE: we are still trying to get hold of these pictures although we are reliably informed by Chris Moiser who *has* seen them that they are unfortunately inconclusive.....

According to *The Electronic Telegraph* - 3 September 1999 a puma has been recorded prowling around a factory by its surveillance cameras. The 3ft-long cat was spotted by a security guard at Blockleys, a brickmakers in Telford, Shropshire. An RSPCA spokesman is reported to have said: "We have used specialist equipment to analyse the film and measure the cat and are of the opinion that this specimen was a puma. It has now been spotted there three times this year." She said the animal was not dangerous but urged people not to try to track it down or trap it.

and says, 'Oh, I guess there's an emu out again,'" Ms. Roos said. "What did I know?"

The escaped emus in Pound Ridge apparently are pets. A Buddhist retreat keeps some on its property. Some other residents with large parcels of land keep emus among their exotics. None would return calls. The new ordinance, which went into effect last month, means an escaped emu - or other "livestock" - can cost its owner as much as \$200. "Usually our problems are with crowing roosters or horses or cows that get loose and wander around on the roads," said Councilwoman Nancy Jane Woolley. "We didn't even know we had emus until they started getting out, because they don't have to be registered or licensed or anything."

OUT OF PLACE



Cue a string of Rod Hull Jokes....

Susan Roos was tooling along in her Land Rover when she crossed a rise and slammed on the brakes, startled by a bird the size of a teenager. "I actually thought my eyes were bad," Roos said. "I see this giant bird. It must have been 5 feet tall. It's running back and forth across the road. The long neck is going up and down like crazy. I slow down and stop, and then I realize what I'm seeing is actually real." What she was seeing was an emu, and in Pound Ridge such encounters are common enough - and frightening enough - that the Town Council in this well-to-do New York suburb has just doubled the loose-emu fine. Not that Roos had any idea she was seeing an emu. She sped to the Town Hall and rushed in, shouting, "There's an ostrich loose!" "Everybody looks up calmly and sort of nods

"They can give you a real kick, and they can kick behind or in front. That's their defense, plus the pecking. They can hurt you. But normally they're not going to bother you if you're not bothering them," said Paul Kupchok, director of the Farm and Wildlife center at Green Chimneys in Brewster, where animals are used as therapy for troubled children. Green Chimneys has two emus and turns away others every month or so. "Emus were all the rage there for a while," Kupchok said. "It seems there's something new every year. Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs, miniature horses, emus, llamas. After a while, people call us, hoping we'll take the animal off their hands." Kupchok fears some owners may simply have released their birds. "Once they escape, they're not coming back," he said. "Emus have no homing instinct."

However, as so often seems to be the case within the annals of fortan zoology (and indeed fortune as a whole) this was not an isolated incident. Emus were figuratively popping up all over the place. An amusing story in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* on July 24, 1999 told how an emu "ran through the local Burger King drive-through", in Palmyra, Wisconsin "fueling all sorts of new Whopper jokes, no doubt, before hightailing it down Highway 59 with the local constabulary in pursuit. To the constabulary's credit, the authorities did their jobs well, corralling the bird without injuries to anyone and then giving it a temporary home. Under those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, chalk this up under crazy - and to a local tradition of strange sightings. Apparently the Emu was reclaimed by its owner and is now safely back where it belongs.

An Emu in Foristell, Missouri was less lucky. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on August 21, 1999: "A man shot and killed an emu after a St. Charles County animal control officer tried unsuccessfully to tranquilize it. The emu was reported running loose around 9:30 a.m. along Highway W in Foristell. A sheriff's deputy responded to the area and found the 6-foot, 125-pound bird running along Schultz Road. He followed it north along Ditrich Road, where the bird nearly caused two accidents as drivers tried to avoid it, authorities said. When it ran back onto Highway W and nearly caused accidents again, an animal control officer shot it with a tranquilizer gun. The tranquilizer didn't work, however, which can happen if the animal's adrenaline is high or if the chemicals are past their shelf life, a county health department official said.

The emu then ran into a yard in the 800 block of Highway W, where a farmer became frightened and shot it. Authorities could not immediately locate the owner. Authorities suspect that the emu was released by someone who had invested in selling the birds as meat."



JAWS 25?

Claims that "25 New Shark Species" have been found in Philippine waters may have been exaggerated. On July, 7 1999, Alex V. Pal, of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Visayas Bureau announced: "Local fishermen had been catching them for years, even for generations. But little did they know that some of the little sharks in their harvest could have earned for them a moment of fame in scientific books. After studying shark specimens collected for five months, scientists have learned that about 25 species have yet to be given names. The first such study on elasmobranchs sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund could put Dumaguete on the scientific map after Australian scientists confirmed the discovery."

However, shark expert John Stephens commented: "Don't believe everything you see in the papers! There are new chondrichthyan taxa in the Philippines but we have more work to do yet before we know how many. There are some 25 species in the collection which we cannot currently put definite names on. Many of these specimens will have to be compared to material from other areas. The newspaper somehow got hold of this and twisted it around."

Moose On The Loose

According to Reuters on July 20, 1999, the Danish authorities were engaged in a hunt for a moose which swam over the narrow sound separating Sweden from Denmark and disappeared into forest north of Copenhagen. An elderly couple walking along the beach at the resort of Hombæk were shocked when the young moose emerged from the sea after swimming five km (three miles) over the sound from Sweden. Moose are unknown on the Danish side of the strait but media in Sweden, where the animal is a national symbol, are closely following the saga of the moose on the loose, with appeals to Danes not to shoot it. For what it is worth Denmark's ambassador in Stockholm gave assurances that the moose will be returned home safely if caught. From a cryptozoological point of view this incident is interesting because of Dr Lars Thomas' theory that many of the sightings of the lake Seljord 'Monster' are actually swimming moose. If this most recent incident has any great historical precedents then it is quite possible that many of the sea serpent sightings from northern waters can now be easily explained.

NEW AND REDISCOVERED

FISHY STORIES

Less contentious are the following discoveries of new fish species reported by Yahoo! News:

http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/19990907/sc/science_meets_movie_1.html

Here is the news item in full:..

WASHINGTON (AP) - When the Smithsonian Institution and the IMAX Corp. decided to make a movie about the Galapagos Islands the result went beyond the giant screen - scientists squeezed in enough research to discover more than a dozen marine species. "Galapagos," the new 3D film focusing on the unusual wildlife on and around the Pacific island group west of Ecuador, will premiere Oct. 27 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. It follows explorations of marine biologist Carole Baldwin in the sea surrounding the 19 islands and also visits the rare and unusual land animals.

"I think I was chosen because I had never been there, and they wanted a scientist with fresh eyes, someone the audience could follow. It was fantastic," she said in a telephone interview. She pronounced the resulting three-dimensional film, displayed on a giant screen, as great. *"The only thing missing in the theater is the cold and wet,"* she said. *"Otherwise, you're there."* But Baldwin didn't settle for just making a movie. *"My goal was science. The filmmaker's goal was certainly to make a film. The film was being funded by the Smithsonian Institution and IMAX, so the idea was to make the film about research,"* she said.

So, research she did.

"We still don't know exactly how many new species we have," she said. The scientists, now back at the museum, must take each of the new finds and compare it with thousands of others in the Smithsonian collection to verify it was not previously known. *"I would say its like dozens" of new finds,* she added. The researchers used a submersible vessel to study the largely unexplored waters between 200 feet and 1,000 feet deep. The area is to deep for scuba diving, and previous studies using submersibles concentrated on deeper waters.

"Finding a dozen new vertebrate species in that length of time is almost unheard of," she said. "But

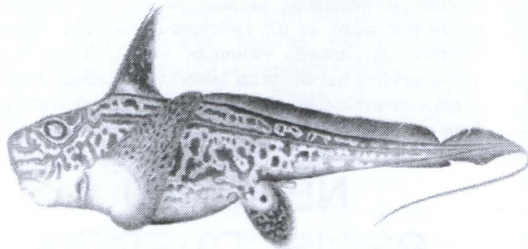
the deep sea is so unexplored its not uncommon to find new things every time you go down." Researchers and film crews stayed 14 weeks in the Galapagos with the only two IMAX 3-D cameras in the world. They visited more than 80 locations, including dives in the four-person submersible. Among Baldwin's discoveries: anthiine bass, a new type of sea bass; an unusual wrasse, a small striped fish that cleans larger fish, from about 400 feet down; a new cat shark; and several new scorpion fish. Baldwin concentrates on fish, but other researchers turned up new types of sponges, urchins and gastropod mollusks, she said.

The new species will be added to the Natural History Museum's 8 million-specimen collection of preserved fish as well as to the collections of the Charles Darwin Research Station in the Galapagos, and the California Academy of Sciences.

Located on the equator 600 miles west of South America, the Galapagos have been called the laboratory of evolution, its strange plants and animals the inspiration for Charles Darwin's theories that became known as Darwinism. The film is to run four times daily on the giant IMAX screen at the National Museum of Natural History. It will be the first regular giant-screen 3-D film shown at the museum. Later it will tour other IMAX theaters around the world.

However these were not the only discoveries of new fish species in recent months.

Dr Dominique Didier Dagit, Assistant Curator and Acting Chair of Ichthyology at The Academy of Natural Sciences and a world authority on chimaeroid fishes, discovered a new species of Chimaera - an ancient deep-sea relative of sharks from the coastal waters off New Zealand. Interestingly the new species,, named *Chimaera panthera* or the leopard chimaera was discovered whilst she was while visiting a museum.



The fish had been given to the National Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, by a local fisherman. Dagit, because of her expertise with these fishes was immediately called to examine the specimen. She determined *Chimaera panthera* was a new species because of its distinguishing leopard-like brown spots that cover the body and fins. This is the first species of *Chimaera* to be discovered in New Zealand and the sixth species to be recognized in the genus.



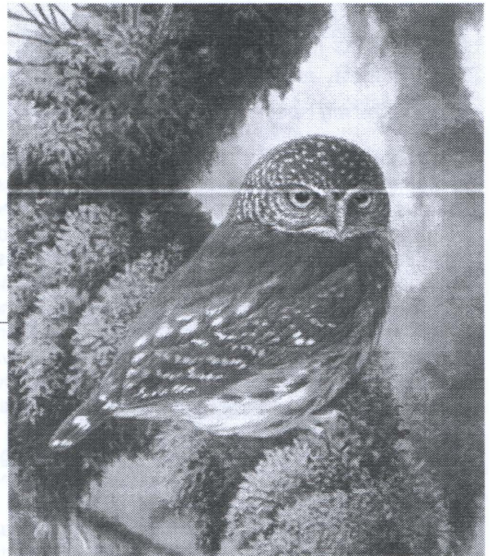
Several new species of deep water fish with 'big eyes and teeth' were reportedly discovered in Hawaiian waters in recent months as well. Although details are scant the Copyright Liberation Front was able to get hold of this picture of Dr Peter Herring, an Ichthyologist with a gloriously lexilinked name, displaying a specimen believed to be a new species of dragonfish. For more details go to <http://starbulletin.com/1999/06/29/news/story7.html>

IT WOULD BE BETTER IF IT HAD BEEN THE OWLMAN BUT...

Fieldwork by a University of Kansas ornithologist continues to reveal the extent of biological diversity of the New World tropics - even as deforestation poses a mounting threat to the survival of many species - with the discovery of a new species of pygmy-owl.

In a cover story published in the April 21 issue of the "Auk," a leading ornithological journal, Mark Robbins, the KU Natural History Museum's collection manager for birds, and his co-author, Gary Stiles of the National University of Colombia in Bogota, name the new species *Glaucidium nubicola*, or Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl.

The bird inhabits the Pacific slope of the Andes in Ecuador and Colombia, and with its discovery and the elevation of a previously identified subspecies to full species rank, Robbins and Stiles revise the taxonomy



of the often overlooked and elusive group of pygmy-owls.

The Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl is the latest new discovery to result from Robbins' work in Ecuador. During the past decade, Robbins has described four new bird species to science. Because birds are perhaps the best known group of organisms, the discovery of a new species is a relatively rare event, with an average of only one new species described every year.

NEW CLASS FOR GALAPAGOS

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have been lucky enough to have been able to report on the discovery of quite a few new species over the past twenty issues of A&M but seldom has there been news as potentially momentous as this. We therefore print the entire news story in full and refrain from comment:

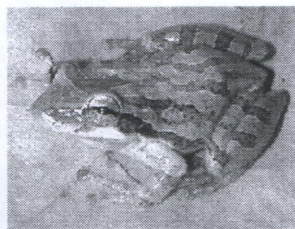
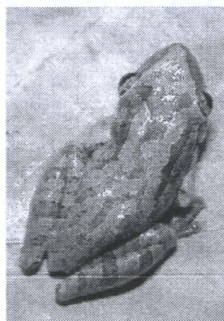
20 June, 1999

Charles Darwin Research Station

The natural fauna of the Galapagos Islands contains four of the five classes of vertebrates. Various species of fish, reptiles, birds and mammals have been present in the Islands for the last several million years. One class, amphibians, has been unable to colonize the remote oceanic archipelago during all of that time primarily due its intolerance of salt water. Recent human activity and climatic fluctuations may have combined to alter the situation and frogs are now another introduced species within the Galapagos.

It appears that reproducing populations of frogs have become established on at least two of the five populated Galapagos Islands. A small (2 - 3 cm) arboreal frog of the Tree frog family Hylidae has been found increasingly frequently in Puerto Ayora, Isla Santa Cruz since 1998. The species, *Scinax quinquefasciata*, is a common frog of coastal lowlands in Ecuador. Seven individuals

have been captured from three general areas within Puerto Ayora, the busiest port in the Galapagos.



Scinax quinquefasciata

The frog introduced to Galapagos in 1998/1999



Additional observations and captures have occurred in Villamil on Isla Isabela, and observations of an apparently similar frog have been made in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on Isla San Cristobal. One individual has been captured aboard a local boat, and another observed aboard a second vessel. Over the last 20 years individual frogs of at least two other species have been occasionally sighted within the ports of Galapagos, but breeding populations were apparently never established.

These populations represent the first known colonization by amphibians of the Galapagos Islands. Amphibians are generally conspicuously absent from the native faunas of oceanic archipelagos because their permeable skins place them in a negative water-balance with salt water.

When in contact with the sea, amphibians dry out as they lose fluids via osmosis to the more concentrated saltwater. Because of their inability to withstand even brief periods in salt water amphibians rarely survive long enough to reach oceanic islands by natural means such as rafting with floating mats of vegetation or floating across expanses of ocean. However, increasing human activity within the Galapagos archipelago requires large amounts of materials from continental Ecuador. Materials reach the islands as freight aboard one of five cargo ships making monthly calls to Galapagos ports or airfreight aboard one of the

three jets arriving daily. Some of the frogs mentioned above were found within packages of vegetables from the continent and in standing water in stored automobile tires, others were found active upon the ground or in trees calling at night.

There is little published about the ecology of *Scinax quinquifasciata*, although a captive individual reportedly lived for nearly 4 years. Other species of the genus *Scinax* are resistant to desiccation and inhabit terrestrial environments where water is not always available. Breeding occurs in small temporary pools where females lay their eggs, which hatch quickly into tadpoles. The larval stage is relatively short and metamorphosis into froglets occurs quickly. Small pools of water and moist soil are common in gardens and around cisterns and leaking pipes within Puerto Ayora. Moist soil is more common in the highlands of Santa Cruz, but there have been no frogs captured there yet. While no tadpoles have been discovered yet, the numbers, distribution, and sizes of adults suggests that breeding is occurring.

The first observations of this species within Galapagos occurred during 1998 at the height of the 1997-1998 El Nino event. Conditions were wetter during parts of those years than at any time since 1983. Severe flooding occurred throughout the coastal regions of Ecuador and reports of unusually dense populations of frogs were common. The current hypothesis of the dispersal of this frog to the Galapagos proposes that abundant populations in the continental port of Guayaquil allowed individuals to take refuge in materials bound for Galapagos by ship or plane. Once they arrived in the islands the unusually wet conditions allowed establishment which has persisted due to the increased availability of suitable microhabitats associated with human habitation.

It is impossible to predict the potential impacts of these frogs on the indigenous fauna of Galapagos. Frogs are mostly insectivorous so this species is presumably eating a variety of Galapagos insects and other invertebrates but we have no idea of the numbers nor species being consumed. Many frogs have poison glands within their skin, and introduced frogs have caused striking declines in the populations of naive native predators in other parts of the world. At this time we don't know if *Scinax*

quinquefasciata possess such glands, nor if any Galapagos organisms are eating them. However, the general policy of the Galapagos National Park Service is to treat all alien species as potential threats to the natural biological diversity of Galapagos and to promote their eradication or control.

The current priorities concerning this newly introduced species aim to determine its distribution and rate of dispersal, compile information about potential means of eradication, search for breeding sites, and perform some simple experiments to explore the potential toxicity to indigenous predators. All frogs found during these activities will be preserved; none will be left in the field.

MORE MONKEY BUSINESS

A monkey weighing less than an ounce was born in captivity in the Brazilian Amazon and could be a new species, Dutch zoologist Marc van Roosmalen said in a statement recently. DNA tests will determine its genus and species, but Roosmalen said the monkey could be "*an anomaly developed by the dwarf marmoset to survive in the rain forest*" threatened by deforestation. "The monkey has hands with claws like the dwarf marmoset, but its size and weight are distinctive," said Roosmalen, who works at the National Institute of Investigations in the Amazon in Manaus, the capital of Amazon state.

The monkeys were found in the same region along the Aripuanan River in the western Amazon where Roosmalen discovered the dwarf marmoset last year. He is convinced this monkey, which has not been named, "*is a different species, because the mothers have only one baby at a time and care for only one baby, while the textbook dwarf marmoset has twins 80 percent of the time.*" The monkey weighs less than 2 ounces now. As an adult, it probably will only weigh between 5 and 6 ounces, Roosmalen said.

MUNTJAC NEWS

In a flurry of news items, Muntjacs have again been capturing the imaginations of the fortune zoological community.



Baker, Howard C. Rosenbaum, William G. Robichaud, & Rob DeSalle, published a paper entitled 'Rediscovery of Roosevelt's Barking Deer (*Muntiacus rooseveltorum*)', in the *Journal of Mammalogy* (80: 639-43.)

Data in this study confirms the validity of a species of muntjac that has been controversial for 60 years. Diagnostic DNA characters are presented for each species examined including the *M. rooseveltorum* holo-type. Three specimens of a recently collected small Laos

Regular readers of these hallowed pages will be aware that we have been monitoring the spate of new zoological discoveries in Hong Kong with some interest and have repeatedly claimed that the discoveries in this tiny and overcrowded corner of the world are of far more significance than other more widely publicised zoological discoveries worldwide.

barking deer have identical sequences to the type specimen of *M. rooseveltorum*

Possibly most exciting is the discovery of an entirely new species of muntjac measuring just 20 inches at the shoulder and weighing no more than 25 pounds. This is the world's smallest deer, according to a recent study led by the Bronx Zoo-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

The "leaf deer" or "leaf muntjac," which lives in remote mountain regions of Southeast Asia, was first seen by WCS biologist Alan Rabinowitz in 1997 during field surveys in northern Myanmar (Burma).

After obtaining specimens from local hunters, Rabinowitz brought samples to New York for DNA analysis. The results of the genetic work, published in the recent issue of the journal *Animal Conservation*, confirmed the leaf deer as unique. "Through DNA sequencing, we were able to determine that this particular species of muntjac was clearly distinct," said the study's lead author, Dr. George Amato, director for conservation genetics for WCS. "It's a very exciting discovery."

It therefore comes as no great surprise to us to find that yet another new species has been added to the mammal list of this former British colony. According to the most recent issue of *Porcupine* - the journal of the department of Ecology and Biodiversity at Hong Kong University, it seems that whereas it has been known for many years (atleast since the days of Robert Swinhoe) that one species of muntjac (*M. reevesi*) lived in the more remote parts of the territory, it now seems as if a second species *M. muntiacus* is also present there.

As we have said on so many occasions over the past four or five years, if such discoveries can be made in such a tiny and well explored area of the globe, Gawd alone knows what lurks in the Amazon.....

In recent years there have been several new species of muntjac found in southeast Asia. Most recently George Amato, Mary G. Egan, George B. Schaller, Richard H.

Monsters of the next millennium

Richard Freeman

The last century has brought us many spectacular new creatures, the mountain gorilla, the komodo dragon, the okapi and others on the list of new animals we are so fond of reciting. At the turning of a new century who among the zoological outcasts will lumber, slither, hop, or flap out of the twilight zone of science and into our textbooks? Here, gentle reader, I present my top ten of likely cryptozoological discoveries for the next 100 years and offer a pint of beer to each reader for any not found by the year 2100.

I omit out-of-placers like big cats, as most aren't true cryptids and it's bloody obvious that most exist.

1: The thylacine. We know it existed up till 1936, it has been seen at close quarters by a zoologist and a wildlife ranger, and has been predicted by computer program. This is the pony to back and few doubt that its rediscovery is only a matter of time.

2: Delcourt's giant gecko. Not many cryptids are stuffed and mounted in museums, but this little blighter is. As with the thylacine we know the world's largest gecko really did exist and sightings of a big arboreal lizard in northern New Zealand suggest it still scampers through the tree tops in parts of this island.

3: The giant anaconda. O.K., anacondas exist, but how big do the buggers get? Being live-bearers, they don't have to come ashore to lay eggs. By being buoyed up in the water they can hypothetically reach huge sizes. Finally they lurk in some of the most ill-explored areas on Earth. I think 15 to 18 metre uncommon specimens may exist.

4: The yeti. Our first "major league media monster" to make it into the top ten. One of the pillars of science is repeatable experiments that get the same results. In several separate laboratories in England, China, and US, yeti hair has been analysed by proton-induced x-ray emission. Guess what conclusion all the scientists came to? - unknown primate. Don't be too surprised if one day you see a King Kong lookalike gazing at you

from the front page of your newspaper.

5: Orang Pendek. The yeti's "little brother" is possibly a large, robust, ground dwelling gibbon. It has been seen by W.A.S.P. scientists, what more could you want? With all the unrest (what a soft name for massacres) perhaps a larger Western presence in Sumatra will finally find this creature.

6: Megalania prisca. The great Australian dragon has recently received a big boost in the credibility stakes with the discovery of a Megalania hip bone unfossilized and possibly only 100 years old. Add this to Aboriginal folk lore, modern sightings (including a herpetologist), livestock kills, and tracks, then you have a big surprise for zoologists and a big worry for sheep, cattle, and hikers.

7: Giant eels. Anyone with any sense knows there are no pre-historic reptiles in Loch Ness but a 9-meter eel is well within the bounds of possibility. Many sea serpent and lake monster reports seem to refer to gargantuan eels whose flexible bodies could present all the outlines shown by aquatic monsters. An old trawlerman once told my grandfather of his encounter with such a being off the Devon coast in the early 70s.

8: Mokele-mbembe. The consistency and history of the Congo monster sightings suggest that *something* big, amphibious and long necked lives in these rain forests. My guess: a long necked semi-aquatic monitor lizard; similar length to Megalania but more slender.

9: The lusca. Controversy still rages over the samples of flesh taken from a massive carcass washed up in Florida in 1896. Some say it was an octopus of Toho Studios dimensions, others that it was a decomposing sperm whale. The Lusca lurks in holes on the sea bed (blue deeps), occasionally surfacing - an octopus of whose dimensions H. P. Lovecraft would have approved.

10: The giant ground sloth. South American Indian sightings of a monster that resembles a mylodont sloth stretch coincidence to breaking point. The natives endow this beast with body armour beneath the skin, except for the stomach. In reality this matches the dermal scutes of the mylodont. Dr David Oren is on the monster's trail and has found its tracks and heard its eerie cry. How much longer until he catches up with his quarry?

Wolverines: a reply

by Chris Moiser

When I researched and wrote my article "*Wolverines or Muddy Badgers?*" for *Animals and Men* 17, I had no idea how much interest and controversy I would be stirring up.

It is very pleasing to know that several people felt the need to put pen to paper in response to my article, and I also feel that the debate has opened up some useful discussion. It was particularly gratifying to see the reference that Tom Anderson made to a 'glutton' being mistaken for a badger in nineteenth century Canada, or British North America, as it would be then. This is a reference that I was not aware of, and I am grateful for it.

A possible initial point that I should mention is the photograph of the muddy badger on the cover of *Animals and Men* 17. This photograph was not taken by me, but by a friend at Porfell Animal Land, not using expensive photographic equipment, but a reasonably cheap, compact camera with a built in flash gun. This photograph was not intended to suggest that a muddy badger, viewed that closely, or from that angle, could be mistaken for a wolverine. It was only intended to show that white badgers can get muddy! It does not, perhaps, take a great deal of imagination to think of seeing this animal in the distance, sideways on, in poor light, when it *could* be mistaken for a wolverine.

The badger concerned has been living in this area for several years, and although I have not seen it in as muddy a condition as it appears in

the picture, I have seen the animal on at least three occasions. I am also aware of other white badgers in the Devon and Cornwall area, and in other parts of the country. As I think that I suggested previously, white badgers, unlike other white mammals, seem to survive to live something like a normal lifetime because they do not, in this country have a top predator that eats them regularly, and could therefore more easily find a white individual.

Terry Hooper's article, "The return of *Gulo gulo*" (Hooper, T. 1998 22 - 24), whilst interesting and capable of promoting a lot of sensible debate, does present an idea of there being a number of separate wolverine populations within the United Kingdom. I find this idea preposterous. Whilst it is possible that there may be one or two groups, the idea of 7 separate populations is frankly ridiculous for the reasons that were stated in my original article.

To summarise them, we are considering an animal that was not imported in any great numbers at all because it was not a popular zoo exhibit; was rarely, if ever, farmed for fur; and had no merits as a pet. The only zoo to exhibit wolverines in England in recent times, that I can find, is Norfolk Wildlife Park. Clinton Keeling has also told me of a pair at Regent's Park in the 1950s/1960s.

As far as I know neither collection have had any escapes and these areas do not overlap with any of those that Terry mentions.

Whilst I respect the need for some confidentiality in running an organisation such as the Exotic Animals Register I think that we are starting to have problems in this area with the credibility of Terry's reports when he claims confidentiality so often. The need for confidentiality is particularly questionable with the alleged group of Wolverines referred to as group A, in the English - Welsh border area. If

these animals were originally here as early as 1969, there surely can be no need for any confidentiality? I base this statement on the following facts.

1. The longest recorded longevity of the wolverine in captivity is 17 years 4 months, so any there now as a result of the happenings of 1969, must be, at least, from the second generation after release.

2. There would be no offence committed in releasing them back in 1969, (the offence of releasing exotic animals into the U.K. was created in 1981). Even if it had been an offence back in 1969 then the statutory limitations would probably have now run out.

3. Revealing the site where the animals were liberated in 1969 would hardly pose much danger to the current population, who will, presumably have moved some distance away in the interim period.

4. Whilst Terry refers to a "loony fringe" of hunters travelling round with illegal high power weapons, and other "hunters for hire", we do, in this country, have some of the toughest fire-arms laws in the world, and some of the strongest anti-hunting feeling in the world. Anybody caught committing any fire-arms offences is in grave danger, *inter-alia*, of losing their fire-arms licence: a major discouragement from hunting on other peoples property without consent.

If these animals have really survived to the third (or more) generation(s), they have done so despite any local knowledge of them, or by remaining so secretive that they have escaped notice in the area in which they live.

I would also suggest that if wolverines were really to be present in the numbers that Terry has indicated he is being most irresponsible in not drawing the attention of the Ministry of

Agriculture to them. I say this on the following grounds. The wolverine has been absent from this island for several thousand years, and there are now no biological controls on its numbers if it were to establish here.

Whilst I am more tolerant than many biologists to the idea of introduced species in the United Kingdom, the wolverine is clearly a species that would not fit well into our current ecology. It could have a disastrous effect on much of our indigenous wildlife and cause many problems with our domestic livestock. Terry's own descriptions of attacks on sheep may perhaps confirm this.

If I may draw an analogy with mink; mink have become established here following releases and escapes from fur farms. It seems unlikely now that we will ever eradicate them from this island. MacDonald (1989), quotes the mink as weighing 1.1 - 3.3 lbs. (0.3 - 1.1 kg). This animal is known for its vicious attacks on ground dwelling waterbirds in particular. Imagine the presence of the wolverine, on average ten times the size, (or larger!) and with similar carnivorous habits, but a reputation for attacking prey larger than itself! The ecological effects if this species were to become established throughout the country would be catastrophic. At the very least a proper scientific study should take place to establish when an eradication policy should be implemented.

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George Lekaukau

by Roy Kerridge.

"I must pray for England! Right or wrong, England is the mother country!"

The occasion was the outbreak of the Gulf War, the place was the middle of the Kalahari Desert and the speaker was George Lekaukau, an elderly cattle herder of fiercely majestic appearance. His voice did not match his looks, for over the years it had shrunk into a sinister sand-blasted whisper. A firm believer in witchcraft, George himself possessed an occult aura, and his pale eyes sometimes blazed alarmingly from his gaunt features, as he whispered an ominous Delphic utterance.

My mother, my two brothers and an anthropologist I shall call Eric were crossing the Kalahari by Landrover, an expedition that was half-work, half-play and all Adventure. George was the "native guide", in time-honoured fashion. However, my family risked starting a new fashion by bringing George home to England afterwards, as a house guest.

Eric had first met George's son, now a member of the Botswana government. To Eric's surprise, he learned that George Senior, despite being able to read, write and of course speak English, had returned to a traditional way of life. As such, he was the answer to an anthropologist's

dream. So, without delay, George was contacted. His cattle seemed able to look after themselves with only a nephew left to draw water and fill their troughs. George seemed happier as a hunter and tracker, one who blithely disregarded game laws imposed by namby pamby conservationists. And so the expedition set out. Some of George's stories and observations were noted down by my mother beneath an African sky, others by myself beneath a Kensal Green lampshade.

Each evening, camp beds would be arranged around a fire; the sky above, a glittering Planetarium. George took the main watch, ever ready to chase a lion with a burning brand. Once, so he said, he had done this in vain, as a huge maned lion seized a Bushman friend of George's by the head and bore the unfortunate man away. George kept the white antelope skin on which his friend had been sleeping.

By day, so George said, lions were in awe of Bushmen.

"The lion is the Bushman's gun", was one of George's whispered utterances.

By this he meant that the lion would kill animals for the Bushmen to eat - not through altruism, however. Bushmen hunters follow a lion until it makes a kill. When the animal has sated its hunger, the Bushmen drive it away and seize the remains of the meal for themselves. My mother later met English people who had seen this. If the lion is the Bushman's gun, could the wolf once have been the caveman's spear? Could the domestication of wolf-into-dog have been brought about by prey-robbing cavemen? Perhaps the cheated wolf thought, "If you can't beat them, join them", and so

joined the human race for the sake of a share in its own kill.

Eric and George, both men of some self-importance, hit it off very well and would sit drinking canned lager and discussing women together in a man-to-man fashion. Some-times Eric would slip away, for he had anthropologised this part of the Kalahari many times before, and had an African girlfriend waiting for him in a thatched hut in almost every settlement. These girls and their children appear to have been somewhat ostracised by the other villagers, and were dependent on Eric's occasional expeditions for their support.

Often, Eric spoke about the book he was writing. He now had a new idea to bring prosperity to Botswana: big game hunting.

"You must tell everyone you know not to kill lions", he instructed George. "Then the lions will increase and rich Germans and Texans will come to shoot them."

George nodded respectfully. Instinctively he had gauged the white man's "class system", for Eric was the expedition's only public school man.

Sometimes George would tell stories, translating tribal tales into English and singing the songs that embroidered the fables in his Tswana language. My mother recognised the Brer Rabbit story where the fox plays dead, but the rabbit tricks him into revealing his mortality by saying "If he was really dead, he'd kick up his leg and shout 'Wahoo' like all dead folks."

In George's story, the rabbit was a hare and the fox a jackal. George accounted for several jackals on the trip, and made their soft silvery hair into a robe. Here is another of his stories:

"The Lion grew old and could no longer hunt, so his servant the Jackal told pretend to be dead. Then the Jackal ran far and wide crying 'King Lion is dead: everyone must come and pay their respects to his body.'

Most of the animals were pleased to hear that Lion was dead, but thought it only right that they should pay their respects. One by one they entered the cave, where they were quickly killed and eaten by Lion, who was in reality very much alive.

At last it came the turn of Hare, who noticed that footprints went into the cave, but none came out.

'Aren't you going to pay your respects?' barked Jackal, noticing that Hare stood still.

'Yes, I will, but just now I'm cold', said Hare. 'I'll light a fire, get warm and then pay my respects.'

So Hare made a fire, and the wind blew the smoke to the entrance of Lion's cave. Hare put more and more green leaves on the fire, so a thick cloud of smoke poured into the cave.

A moment later, out came Lion, coughing and wiping at his eyes with his paws. His cave was full of smoke.

'Run! See, Lion is alive!' called Hare.

So most of the animals escaped, thanks to the cleverness of Hare."

As the expedition rattled deeper into the Kalahari, George kept a look out for Bushmen, traceable by their wispy grass shelters and secret signs to show the underground presence of water or edible tubers. At villages, humble chiefs, very much at one with their people, would greet the party with happy politeness.

Village Africans are very formal. The villages themselves consist of huts within compounds of sticks and clay, these small compounds being scattered over an area of twenty miles or more. In a few villages made prosperous by a new road, round clay huts with thatched roofs have been replaced by garage-like square buildings made of breeze blocks, with corrugated iron roofs. Unlike huts, these had been built with furniture and a Western interior in mind. Today, Beauty and Poverty may go hand in hand. I say "may", because George didn't seem to appreciate the beauty of the wild animals of the Kalahari.

"When I see an animal, I must kill, eat!" he once declared fiercely. "No time to look at beauty, it might get away! I only kill what I need, and I only kill lions if they raid my cattle.

In our front room at Kensal Green, George watched the black and white version of "King Solomon's Mines" on television, with great relish, believing the story to be true and the actors 'real.' At the Natural History Museum, he believed the roaring automated

dinosaurs to be real, but stood his ground stoically, St. George to the robot dragon.

People in England don't need Bushmen, as they don't witchcraft each other. When we get witchcraft, we swell inside. We go to Bushmen, they cut us and take out the poison. "Once I was very ill. I could feel a thing scratching inside me, so I went to the Bushmen. One cut me and took out a small snake. They are wise, they cut people and take out snakes and scorpions.

Again and again, George's conversation turned to lions. In this, he was the complete opposite of West Africans I have met in London, who often say "I suppose you think Africa is a place full of lions - well, I've never seen a lion."

George *had* seen lions.

"One night, I was riding home on a horse, with a Bushman friend behind me on a donkey. A lioness appeared suddenly from behind a tree. We froze, the Bushman with one foot on the stirrup and one on the ground. The lion looked so surprised! It was really surprised to see us there. I could see that it wished to speak to us, to ask us what we were doing. But it could not speak our language

We could not speak its language. At last, the Bushman shouted 'Kwai! Kwai!' The lion ran away quickly. Only then it realised we were human beings.

"Another time, a friend and myself tracked and killed a gemsbok that had a dead shrivelled-up lion on its horns. It had impaled the lion on its long curved horns and then

could not get them free. So it had to drag the dead lion about - such a heavy load."

The gemsbok is a large beautiful desert antelope, first cousin of the Arabian oryx, the animal said to have once been mistaken for a unicorn. It is an Official Protected Species.

I had already discovered that, to many Africans, National Parks are "game preserves". George and his friends shoot only for food. No part of the gemsbok is wasted, for bags and garments are made from the hide.

Moffat, Livingstone's mentor (1795-1883) brought the plough and the muzzle-loading gun to the Kalahari in the nineteenth century. Horses and donkeys followed.

"Would you believe it, these people never even had the plough?" marvelled the well-meaning white men of Moffat's day. After a brief bonanza of crops and a mountain of bullet-shot meat, the Kalahari became the barren, sandy place it is today. In George's grandfather's time, giraffes and elephants roamed the plains. The plough soon destroyed the soil and the gun accounted for much of the big game. Until horses and donkeys were introduced, the ox was a riding-horse. Now cattle are kept mainly for meat and prestige.

Talking to George about cattle was rather tricky, as it involved a breach of Kalahari etiquette. Cattle to George represented wealth, and asking about them was rather like saying "How much do you earn?" or "What are you worth?"

At first, so I learned, George wondered to himself where the Londoners and other English kept their cattle. Later, he realised that they had none, and his scorn knew no bounds. What a nation of paupers!

Innocently, my mother once asked George if he milked his own cows. His eyes blazed in fury, there was a dark silence, then he snapped out, "Am I not a man?"

It transpired that, among George's people, milking the cattle was very much a man's job.

At night, on the edge of the Kalahari, lone cows sometimes passed by in the darkness. "That's so-and-so's cow," George would say, as if each animal made a recognisable sound. Long years of breeding had brought into being a large, healthy glossy breed of "homing cattle". Soil sandy enough to bear grass can now only be found a day's journey from each village. Cattle set off, not in herds, but in ones and twos, in search of food. Two days later, perhaps, the animals return for a deep drink and a sleep in the shade. Then off they go again, coming and going all the time, with no herder - true "homing cattle." Western cattle farmers might well envy George's people.

"My people were pressed into the Kalahari by the Zulus!" George said. "We lost all our cattle and had to start afresh by raiding cattle from the Ngama tribe. What! What do you mean, 'stealing'? It was *not* stealing, we won those cattle in fair war!

"Now, when a man is hungry, he can go to his well and kill a cow or a goat. When there is a wedding, there is a great feast, presented by the father of the bride. Guests arrive with presents, we sit and eat around the fire outside, with music from speakers and people dancing. Then we eat meat."

George would get angry if I referred to him as "a Tswana", as he felt that he belonged not to a tribe, but to a clan. "Tswana" is the name of a language, but the speakers of that language are divided into clans, each clan headed by a totem animal (as with the Clan Chattan, or Cat Clan of Scotland. We learned of an Ostrich Clan, a Porcupine Clan and of George's own clan, the Clan of the Multi-Coloured Cow.

Unfortunately for George, his association with magic-practising Bushmen led his Chief to brand him as a witch. He had no hut, but lived and slept under a tree.

"I can live like a Bushman, and dig up tubers to eat", he said. "I just drink my gin. Once I couldn't find my way, so I took off my coat, went to sleep, and when I woke up I knew where I was."

English country people, when "pixie-led" or unaccountably lost in their own fields, used to take off their coats and put them on again inside-out. Having done this, they could find their way.

Unlucky, George had lost not only his clan, but his country. Through most of his life, Botswana was Bechuanaland, a British Protectorate. George appeared to think that he once had belonged personally to Queen Victoria, a happy state of affairs now

vanished. "Independence" for George (one of the most independent men I have met) spelled Doom.

"It was good when I belonged to the Queen", he reminisced in rueful anger. "Suddenly a man from my enemy clan appeared and said 'Now you belong to me!'

'Why is this?' we asked.

'You just do!' was the reply. So now we are ruled from the city of Gabarone - ha! Those who rule us, do you know what they call us? Ha! They are our enemy. This is what we would like to know - has the Queen forgotten us?"

It was hard to explain to George that the present Queen herself is ruled by a set of politicians probably as bad as those in Gabarone. In fact, the Gabarone politicians my mother and brother met seemed remarkably mild. However, according to Eric the Overpaid Anthropologist, George's own son now worked for the government in the capital, and pretended that he was a member of the ruling clan.

Apparently, if it were known that George's once-adoring son was a member of the Multi-Coloured Cow Clan, he would lose his job.

Whether in the Kalahari or Britain, George never lost his stiff almost contemptuous sense of pride. His opinion of London may be judged by the speed with which he rushed towards his aeroplane at Heathrow, glancing back only for a moment before galloping off to the sanity of Africa, a land where men are men and own the cows to prove it.

BESTIARY

by Ade Dimmick

THE CHIMAERA

The Chimaera or Chimera was a fire-breathing creature from classical mythology.

It was described by Homer as having the foreparts of a lion, the middle of a goat, and the hindparts of a serpent. A 5th century Etruscan bronze depicts the creature as having a lion's head, a goat's head protruding from its body and a serpent's head at the end of its tail. Other descriptions have referred to the 'Divine Nymph', and having the face of a beautiful maiden.

The Chimaera was the female offspring of the snake goddess Echidne and the storm god Typhon. Although there was only one Chimaera she is usually depicted as having swollen teats beneath her body, which may suggest suckling young. This however, could be largely symbolic, and the Chimaera's young need not be of the same species given the diverse nature of mythological reproductive cycles.

It is said that the Chimaera originated from Lydia in Asia Minor and is generally associated with the Near East and the Mediterranean region - although a statue of a Chimaera-type creature was discovered in China, dating from the Han Dynasty.

The Chimaera was renowned for such qualities as strength and swiftness, as well as symbolising storms, wind and danger. She was also seen as representative of the Divine Feminine, latterly becoming synonymous with evil.

It is written that the Chimaera would regularly wreak havoc upon the land, killing anything that got in the way of its fiery breath. At some point the Chimaera also became the household pet in the court of the king of Caria!

The unfortunate creature was eventually destroyed by Bellerophon who, riding upon the recently tamed Pegasus, cast lead into her mouth. Her fiery breath melted the lead which ran down her throat, searing all her vital organs. (There is no record of which mouth; one would assume it was the lion's.)

Robert Graves, believed that the Chimaera was a calendar beast symbolic of the tripartite year of the Great Goddess, with the lion, goat and serpent representing Spring, Summer and Winter respectively. Another related theme is that the Chimaera's death was symbolic of the destruction of the shrine of the Great Goddess who had previously reigned supreme.

Another theory is that the Chimaera was a figurative description of a volcanic mountain in Lycia (Hence the fiery breath.) At the summit was a lair of lions and in the middle was a pasture of goats and serpents infesting the foothills. In his Natural History, Pliny referred to a volcano called Chimaera near Phaselis, Lycia.

The legacy of the Chimaera is still with us, having crept into modern language.

Today a Chimaera is an illusion or fabrication of the mind. And to "chase the Chimaera" is to indulge in useless flights of fancy. Scientifically, a Chimaera refers to an organism containing genetically different tissues formed by the fusion of early embryos.

CRYPTO-CURIOSITIES OF KENT'S PAST

by Neil Arnold

The foliage of Robin Hood Wood spills like a green liquid, linking the thickets of Blue Bell Hill, Maidstone, Boxley, Goudhurst, Malling and Aylesford. These heavy and historic pastures throughout the Weald of Kent are steeped in mystery, especially the phenomena of ghostly activity. Yet through the spooky occurrences and spectral incidents it is fair to say that the eerier situations have overshadowed other form of strange phenomena.

Now, Kent can stand alongside the West country as bearing a great variety of phenomena and it makes me proud to say that the hitch-hiker of Blue Bell Hill and Pluckley's twenty-something apparitions are now joined by a number of unusual beasts that have in fact inhabited this rural abode for many hidden years. Whilst some dazzling UFO cases have emerged over the years, the sightings - and even reports of landings - have been overshadowed by Kent's more ghostly occurrences. However, at the moment the 'big cat flap' cannot be ignored and so gives me reason to retell a few tales of out of place animals and weird creatures, as well as recount some other incidents not heard before.

Hounds From The Outer Edge

Joan Forman is a respected author on the supernatural and had a weird encounter with a peculiar creature during the 1950s. At the time Joan worked at a village school in Goodhurst and for the first few nights she slept in the

oldest part of the building. At 3:30am she awoke to see a strange beast crouching in the corner of the room and staring at her with wide eyes. The 'thing' just sat there looking at her for some hours, yet gave off a menacing aura. Joan described the creature as being two feet in length, much bigger than a domestic cat and unlike anything she'd seen before. The strangest thing occurred as dawn gradually rolled in: the thing just seemed to fade with night's exit.

Immediately then, we have to consider some kind of supernatural entity, as it didn't just get up and walk out of the room. However sleepy a person may be we have to trust their eye for detail and so it seems this creature may have been more akin to the phantom black dogs rather than a real creature. Even an out of place big cat seems out of the question for although Joan would not have expected to see a large feline, she would surely of recognised its form? So, was this beast some kind of omen or a warning? However, if this beast was actually there only for her it does not explain the other sightings made by other women in the building who also saw similar forms.

I have mentioned in a previous article that my mother has seen a ghostly black dog in her bedroom. This was a traumatic time of illness and yet the odd apparition proved to be a symbol of good will.

A similar case concerns an aunt of mine who was extremely poorly, at unrest and very troubled due to an infection in her blood. She has never had any interest in or knowledge of the paranormal but she also saw a small, black and quite ghostly dog during a stressful night. The dog seemed to be a symbol of better things to come, as she soon recovered from her illness.

Four miles west of Maidstone lies Trottiscliffe (pronounced Trosley) and it is here that a weird creature resides. The famous Pilgrims Way path that runs from London to Canterbury splices the Trosley area and in its wooded area a gigantic frothing hound roams. Nothing is really known about the huge animal. It has only been sighted in this area and on just a few occasions.

Although the known path cuts through the heavy foliage of the North Downs it does not seem as though the beast has been mistaken for one of the many big cats in the vicinity. There are no tales pertaining to the hounds legend which is why the story is hardly featured anywhere. Maybe it just boils down to a straight forward haunting or maybe something more sinister.

Five miles east of Maidstone sits the beautiful structure, Leeds Castle, a picturesque masterpiece shrouded in history and blanketed by an eeriness that does not just hold phantom people in its stony walls. The Black Dog Of Leeds is considered to be the bringer of misfortune, the conjurer of ill-will, as it prowls the cold halls.

However, on one occasion the mysterious creature actually saved a woman's life. The hound attracted the attention of a lady who was sitting on a bay at a window overlooking the wonderful moat. The woman was intrigued by the weird animal and stood up to follow it. As she neared the creature it simply vanished and at that moment the bay cracked and collapsed, plummeting to the murky depths below. And so this spectral hound, hitherto known as a symbol of grief, was on this occasion a saviour.

The black dog lore is famous throughout Britain and some kind of pattern does emerge from the sightings reported. Some of the hounds never really give much indication that they are actually etherial creatures although

fiery eyes and a 'Baskerville' glow are reported. It seems that the larger hounds, like the evil Black Shuck, are indeed a signification of misfortune. The smaller dogs, even if they do appear malevolent, certainly appear to be of good cause. It seems unusual that some greater, unseen force should use a dog to represent grief but there is certainly something odd about the creatures, otherwise people would surely pass the animal off as your average four-legged friend. A majority of the time, the beast is there to cause fear, emitting some kind of menace.

If You Go Down To The Woods Today..

I always thought over-sized rabbits and spectral bunnies were the spectacle of magical movies like "Alice In Wonderland" and "Watership Down". However, a recent issue of "Encounters" magazine featured a letter regarding the sighting of a twelve-foot tall rabbit.

This brings to mind a strange incident that took place in the '70s. It happened in Robin Hood Woods, an area that must conceal a haunted history. Rumours of a voodoo woman that runs across the country fields could well be connected to the fiend that was spotted.

It's a case I have not read anywhere; it comes from a friend who I trust and as it concerns a six-foot tall bunny I don't think the witness would have rushed to tell the authorities due to the possibility of becoming a laughing stock. However, this person is sure that what they saw in the woodland was a white rabbit, not standing on its back legs, and measuring a 'whopp-

-ing size'. This furry fright caused a lot of stress to the witness who probably thought he would be perceived as a mad hatter. Since then, no other sightings have occurred. Maybe the bestial bunny was some kind of weird spectre, but explaining its size is something beyond me. The animal was described as 'giant' and adds a whole new meaning to the name Thumper. The closest thing I can compare to this creature would be an out of place kangaroo which would surely have shocked the witness enough to cause confusion. Not everyone expects to see a kangaroo in the woods of Kent so misidentification was possible. However, on both accounts it is still weird.

About eight years ago myself and some old friends decided to let some fireworks off in nearby woodland, an area overlooked by the haunted Blue Bell Hill. It was November time, a smoke-filled night and being the lads we were, we ventured to the dark woods firing rockets and generally messing about. The woodland had a path that at the time was not illuminated so we walked in blackness. We reached a central area of the woods huddled together and trusting our senses. We decided to light a fire. After about half an hour we decided to make our way home as the fire was becoming a little uncontrollable. We began to walk along the path, still shuffling nervously, until the embers were out of sight. One of my friends was worried about the flames so wanted to go back and put the fire out properly. We walked half way, then let him go on alone - but, as he came to the flames, he got the fright of his life. He screamed and ran back to us, waffling in an hysterical manner. We made our way out the woods in a scramble and made it to a nearby estate before my friend told us of his encounter. He said he saw a head pop up out of the darkness and then saw

a creature, like a large ferret with white fur, stand up. Apparently, like in the good old films, they both terrified each other. I know for a fact he wasn't 'winding us up', as he was in such a state especially as the creature was almost as tall as him. He stands at about five foot eight. (about 1.6 metres.)

To this day, I can remember that night. I can never explain the over-sized animal but imagine something with a ferret's head and snow-white in colour. Whatever it was it wasn't seen again. This is not thick woodland but due to the creature's reactions it seems as though it was real; for, let's face it, you never hear of a frightened ghost!

PHANTOM OR FLESH ?

It is November 1963. The fireworks are just dying out over Sandling Park in Hythe. Four friends are strolling home after a dance and they are attracted by a weird light floating over the trees nearby. They become worried by the orb which moves towards them before dropping behind some more trees. One of the boys, seventeen year old John Flaxton is becoming extremely cold as the group become disturbed by the light which has reappeared. It is following them and every time they stop in their motion the light seems to halt too. It then disappears behind more trees. The boys then spot a strange humanoid figure waddling towards them. It is tall, dark and appears headless. The leathery creature bears two wings and continues to shuffle towards them. The boys run for their lives before the thing gets any closer for them to notice any other details.

The following days throw up evidence in the form of three footprints of unusual character and the surrounding woodland is bathed in a peculiar light for a short time. Mothman had come.

This sighting of extreme strangeness spawned many other odd experiences around the globe. Many people were seeing birdmen, the bat-squatch and leather-winged humanoids. But why? Surely not some form of undiscovered creature?

Not a lot of evidence points to this theory and it seems the thing was more of a spectral manifestation rather than real creature. Who knows why only three prints were found or why the creature appeared in this area at all because Hythe is no hot-spot for any sort of strange phenomena. John Keel said that maybe the area was some kind of 'window' to another dimension but since that sighting there have been no other events to suggest a UFO flap or any kind of enigma pertaining to the forteen world. Maybe the boys are similar to the witnesses (women mainly) who have spotted Owlman of the West country. Maybe only a certain type of adolescent or teenager can see this being. It could be part of some mental vortex but whatever the case, Hythe was certainly an unusual place for this thing to show itself.

And why the light? Well, there is the old theory that the creature was some sort of alien and emerged from its flying saucer but maybe the light was simply given off as the creature actually flew through the air, because what is the point in having a UFO if you've got wings...? Maybe Mr. Mothman can't fly through our sphere on mere wing power.

Other UFO sightings were reported in the Hythe area but this does not mean we must connect the creature with the saucer phenomenon for UFOs are basically seen everywhere nowadays. And so the mystery remains. I also feel that the creature may not have been headless and that its features were concealed by the

enshrouding wings. But whatever those boys saw it was very disturbing.

There may be no connection here but a few years back my father (who isn't very open on the paranormal) was angling on Hythe sea-front. It was a winter night and around midnight when my father was approached by two peculiar characters that my father could only describe as 'ninjas'. These two 'men' came out of nowhere and stood watching my father. They were 'dressed' from head to toe in black, even their heads were masked. My dad acknowledged them but they just turned and walked off. Of course, I am not saying that these two beings were from another planet or indeed anyway related to the winged creature but I think their presence was mysterious.

More Beasts...

In January 1973 a Folkestone man was driving from Capel to Alkham and saw a strange creature cross the road directly in front of his car. The man was not sure what he'd seen but a few days later a gamekeeper and RSPCA inspector found a few paw-prints and said they were made by a big cat, possibly a puma.

In the early '70s Kent was not exactly the big cat hot-spot it is today but after the Alkham sighting other witnesses stepped forward. One man said he saw a large feline at 3:30am whilst driving between Canterbury and Lympne.

During this time this may have been the same creature spotted for there was no estimated report as to how many big cats were loose in the wilds of Kent. There can be no questioning their realism as many private collections have been released but zoo escapes have not been in abundance enough in the past to suggest the cats have

broken free. In the early part of the 1900s Blue Bell Hill bore Drakes Zoo, a small business that ran a small train through the village and into the zoo grounds. Although the zoo was more of a 'farm' it still housed a number of larger creatures which may have escaped unnoticed as the park gradually became dilapidated.

Certainly one of the most peculiar, and oldest sightings comes from the year 1205. Although little is written on the incident I am eager to find out more about it as it is such a weird occurrence. It happened in Maidstone and the tale was told by an Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall. In his writings he mentioned a huge, raging storm of lightning bolts and thunder claps. On this torrid night a strange beast was struck by lightning and left as a charred, smoking mass. Apparently the odd corpse that gave off such a vile stench was unlike any other creature. It was described as having the head of an ass, the belly of a human and limbs all differing from each other. The strange thing is, there doesn't seem to be any record of sightings in regards to this sort of beast so scepticism does arise. One thing I am not is a sceptic but the evidence for this time is extinct.

The thing is, how do we know that it was not a normal animal like a dog that had been burnt to an unrecognisable mess? If the corpse was not badly scorched then the beast would have maintained its form but as it was it was surely too much of a state to identify it. Whatever the case, this is still an unusual moment in Kent's history and if we are looking at an unknown creature then this is a very bizarre case indeed. I'm sure that many documents of the past would be very fascinating in regards to strange creature sightings but getting hold of them is a task in itself.

In 1975 on the banks of the River Stour, at Sandwich, witnesses reported seeing a large, out of place reptile. Although the reports were ignored at first they were soon taken notice of when many people saw a crocodile, over five-feet in length bathing on the banks. This is obviously a case of zoo escape or more likely someone's own creature being unleashed due to the authorities being 'onto' them. It is fortunate that no swimmer or angler disturbed the creature; yet it proves that Kent's tranquil countryside is a more than sufficient habitat for large out of place animals.

APPARITIONS OR ANIMALS?

Some people do seem to be the target of paranormal incidents. They are susceptible to the world of the supernatural. They are plagued by ghosts, by UFOs, by poltergeist phenomena and on a more sinister note they seem open to ghastly manifestations that either appear as over-sized known creatures or completely hideous and unrecognisable things.

Deciphering the apparition from animal is no easy task, for there are indeed strange creatures lurking in the shadows, and for a person to see a real crocodile is almost as shocking as seeing a ghostly dog. There is no doubt that some reputedly haunted areas are conjuring up creatures that are 'targeting' sensitive people on a mental level. On the other hand, however unusual some out of place sightings are we must accept that there's literally hundreds of roaming creatures in the wrong place at the wrong time.

And not all of them seem to be God's great creatures.

So how many kiwi species are there?

by
Darren Naish

The exact number of kiwi species was until recently a fairly stable situation - there were three species, one of which, the Brown kiwi, could be subdivided into three subspecies. However, new studies on kiwi DNA indicate that things might be more complex than this. The history of the different kiwi species is also interesting - over time, various workers have regarded different populations as worthy of their own specific or subspecific status. The discovery of the three universally accepted kiwi species was in fact a rather slow and drawn-out affair that spanned much of the 19th century.

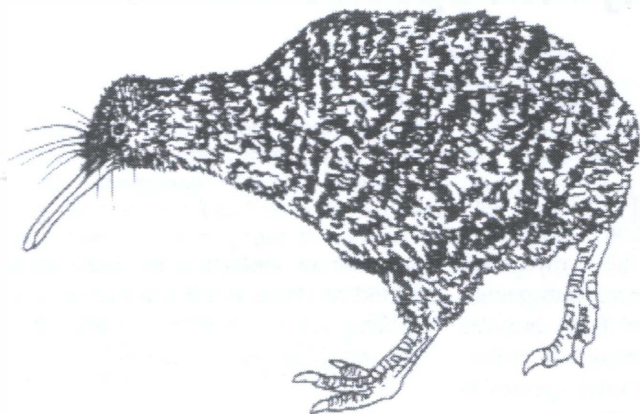
The first kiwi to be described and named, the **Brown kiwi** (*Apteryx australis*) Shaw 1813, was not joined by a second species until 1847 when John Gould named *A. owenii*, the **Little spotted kiwi**.

While there have been a few (unsuccessful) attempts to give *A. owenii* its own genus, it has retained its original name and, aside from Rothschild's unsuccessful attempt in 1893 to create a new subspecies (*A. owenii occidentalis*), it has remained undivided. A kiwi named *A. mollis* by Thomas Potts in 1873 has since proved to be a junior synonym of *A. owenii*. The smallest and one of the rarest kiwis, *A. owenii* was formerly widespread on both North and South Island

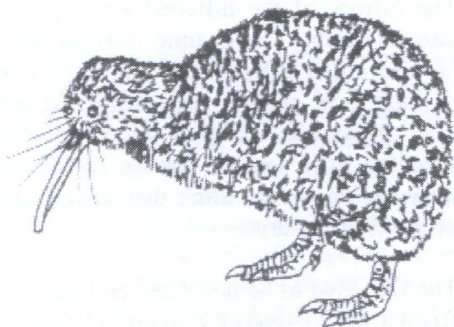
but is now restricted to five special island reserves. With a population of around 1,110 (as of mid 1999), it is reportedly increasing in numbers.

In 1850, Bartlett decided that the Brown kiwis from North Island were worthy of specific status - they were smaller, darker and with coarser plumage than South Island birds - and he named them *Apteryx mantelli*.

Zoologists disagreed about Bartlett's suggestion over the following years and McLennan (1991) notes that 14 papers were published on this one issue alone. In 1888, Sharpe took things a step further and argued that some *A. mantelli* specimens deserved to be regarded as yet another new species, *A. bulleri*. The latter species proved to be unwarranted, but Bartlett has been partly vindicated in that it has become generally accepted that the North Island birds do warrant separate recognition, but as a subspecies (the **North Island brown kiwi** *A. australis mantelli*), not as a species. The south

illustrations by the author

Top: the Greater spotted kiwi
(Apteryx haastii)



Bottom: the Lesser spotted kiwi
(A. owenii)

Island brown kiwi thus became the nominate version of *A. australis* and is now *A. a. australis*. A new species named by Potts in 1873, *A. fusca*, has proved to be a synonym of *A. a. australis*.

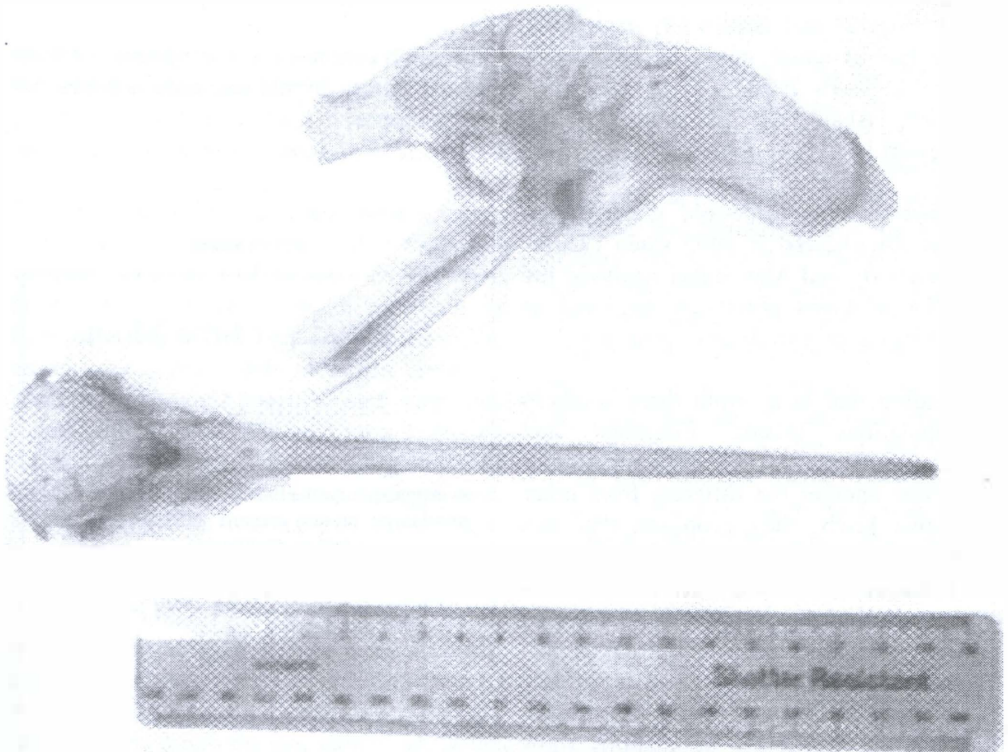
The last great discovery in kiwi taxonomic research (perhaps) was the naming in 1871 of *Apteryx haastii*, the **Great spotted kiwi**, by Potts following his examination of two skins collected from Westland. Potts named this species in honour of Julius von Haast, then the director of the Canterbury Museum and a

scientist who had spent much time searching for kiwis and other birds in the countryside of New Zealand. *A. haastii* is believed to be the same as *A. maxima*, the name created by Jules Verreaux based on anecdotal tales of an especially large and aggressive kiwi (and not based on any specimen or backed up by a description). As noted below, other workers regarded *A. maxima* as the same as the brown kiwis from Stewart Island, while some

cryptozoologists have even suggested that *A. maxima* may have been based on observations of emeid moa.

What was regarded as another new species of kiwi, the **Stewart Island kiwi**, was described by Walter Buller in 1890. Noting the large size of his specimen, Buller regarded this kiwi (confusingly) as the same as *A.*

maxima. Pointing out the problematic lack of a type specimen and description for this alleged species in 1893, Walter Rothschild argued that Buller's kiwi must be given a new name, and he called it *A. lawryi* (the *lawryi* honours Buller's middle name). Subsequent work showed that the Stewart Island kiwi was distinct from other types, but it was



Skull and pelvis of Stuart Island brown kiwi (*Apteryx australis lawryi*).
Note the extraordinary length of the bill.

downgraded to a subspecies of *A. australis*, thus becoming *A. a. lawryi*. Amongst brown kiwis, the Stewart Island form is quite distinctive with a particularly large beak and legs. Unlike other brown kiwis (where they are light brown), in the Stewart Island form these features are bluish grey.

Thus by the end of the 19th century, kiwi taxonomy had stabilised and there appeared to be three good species (the Little spotted (*A. owenii*), Great spotted (*A. haastii*) and Brown (*A. australis*)), the last of which could be subdivided into a South Island (*A. a. australis*), North Island (*A. a. mantelli*) and Stewart Island (*A. a. lawryi*) subspecies.

However, this three-fold classification was complicated in 1993 when Charles Daugherty and Alan Baker analysed the DNA of kiwis previously regarded as belonging only to *Apteryx australis*.

Finding that birds from three southern populations (Haast, Fiordland and Stewart Island) were genetically similar to one another but different from other brown kiwis, they proposed that this newly recognised form be named **Tokoeka** ('Tokoeka' is actually the Maori word for the Weka (*Gallirallus australis*)). Further research has shown that the Haast population - informally dubbed the **Haast tokoeka** - is distinct from the two other populations (now referred to as **Southern tokoeka**) and may warrant separate recognition.

Curiously, the tokoekas bear a superficial resemblance to the Great spotted kiwi. This may indicate that our understanding of kiwi interrelations is set for some major changes. A further surprise is that some South Island brown kiwis - a group currently known as the **Okarito brown kiwis** - are also genetically distinct, and far more closely related to North Island brown kiwis than to tokoekas. Okarito browns have proved to be critically endangered - the population is estimated at 200 individuals and is restricted to just 40 km² of forest.

Research continues on the affinities of these forms and a formalised nomenclature has yet to appear.

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by

Jonathan Downes

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Big in Japan

Richard Freeman

Japan conjures up images of an ultra high-tech society, towering sky-scrappers, flashing neon signs, overpopulation, a world akin to "Bladerunner". As with most foreign images of other countries it is wrong. Almost 90 percent of Japan is covered with mountains. Most of the population is urban and crowded into the cities in the few flatter areas. It may seem odd that such an advanced country still harbours unknown animals but the monsters that still walk beneath the rising sun are some of the strangest in the world.

Hibagon: A Japanese ape?

It is fitting that one of the world's most mountainous countries should have its own version of the *Yeti*. Though somewhat smaller than its Himalayan cousin the Japanese *Hibagon* is nonetheless a terrifying beast. Inhabiting the mount Hiba area and its surrounding wilderness in the Hbayama national park, it is said to stand 5 feet tall, is covered with bristly brown hair turning white on the chest, and resembles a gorilla. It possesses a snub nose, long muscular arms and smells like a rotting cadaver. The monster first appeared in 1970 and terrorized the district for several years.

A typical sighting was that of Reiko Harada, a 46 year old seamstress, and her young son in 1972. Whilst walking home she saw a *Hibagon* standing by the roadside. The creature raised its hands as if signalling her to

stop. Reiko went numb with terror and shook violently. Eventually she managed to pick up her child and run home. A search later revealed crushed shrubs and a stench akin to a decomposing body.

There is a type of large monkey in Japan, the Japanese macaque (*Macaca fuscata*).

These are the famed "snow monkeys" renowned for bathing in hot springs then drying out in the steam. They also live at a higher altitude than any other primate. However this animal is less than half the size of *Hibagon*. As stated before, most of Japan is sparsely settled mountain wilderness. It is far from impossible that a moderately sized unknown ape or giant short tailed monkey still inhabits the mountain forests. Most fascinating of all, could this creature's frightening appearance be the genesis of the demonic *Oni*? These are Japanese devils with animalistic red faces. They walk the earth in search of souls to drag back to hell.

One particularly vile demon was Kappa. This creature had the head of a monkey, the shell of a terrapin, and the body of a frog. Despite its small size this aquatic demon was extraordinarily strong and could drown a horse. Like all the best demons Kappa was fond of human flesh. His power came from a magick liquid in a concave depression in his skull. The best way to defeat Kappa was to bow upon meeting him. Despite his evil nature Kappa had Japanese politeness and would bow back spilling his liquid and losing his strength.

Kappa was also addicted to the

taste of cucumber and could be influenced by anyone who fed him this vegetable.

Issie and its kin: the modern day dragons of Japan.

Perhaps the most celebrated of movie monsters is Godzilla. Created in the 50s by Toho studios the 350 foot tall, radioactive fire breathing, mutant *Tyrannosaurus rex* has rampaged his way through dozens of films, destroying Tokyo countless times in battles with foes ranging from giant blobs created by pollution to robot replicas of himself.

Godzilla has his roots in the legends of Japanese dragons. These magnificent monsters resemble Chinese dragons but have some important differences. They have only three claws on each foot, unlike the imperial dragon of China, who had five talons. They also lacked the Chinese dragon's complex, staged life cycle. Japanese dragon's eggs resembled precious stones and once hatched the dragons attained huge size very quickly. One tale tells of a peasant boy who brought home dragon eggs believing them to be jewels. Small holes opened in their tops and tiny dragons flew out. The little reptiles swelled at an astounding rate and smashed through the roof of his house.

Some early travellers descriptions of dragons kept and worshipped in Japanese temples resemble crocodiles. Indeed the Indo-Pacific crocodile that can reach 30 feet in length sometimes strays into the waters around Japan's southernmost islands. Such

a monster would make a fine blue print for a dragon. If Japanese mariners travelled as far afield as their Chinese counterparts they may have encountered *Megalania prisca*, the 30-ft Australian monitor lizard. Even on the cusp of the millennium dragon-like creatures are still reported.

Lake Ikeda near the city of Kagoshima on the island of Kyushu has an interesting legend attached to it. The story goes that in ancient times a white horse and her foal grazed close to the waters of this extinct volcano. One day a samurai took the foal away, doubtless to raise it as his steed. The mare leapt into the lake searching for her offspring, occasionally surfacing, to the amazement of locals.

There may be some grain of truth in this story, as strange creatures are reported today in lake Ikeda. The reports describe a massive animal over 30 feet in length with a snake-like head and neck, and a long humped back.

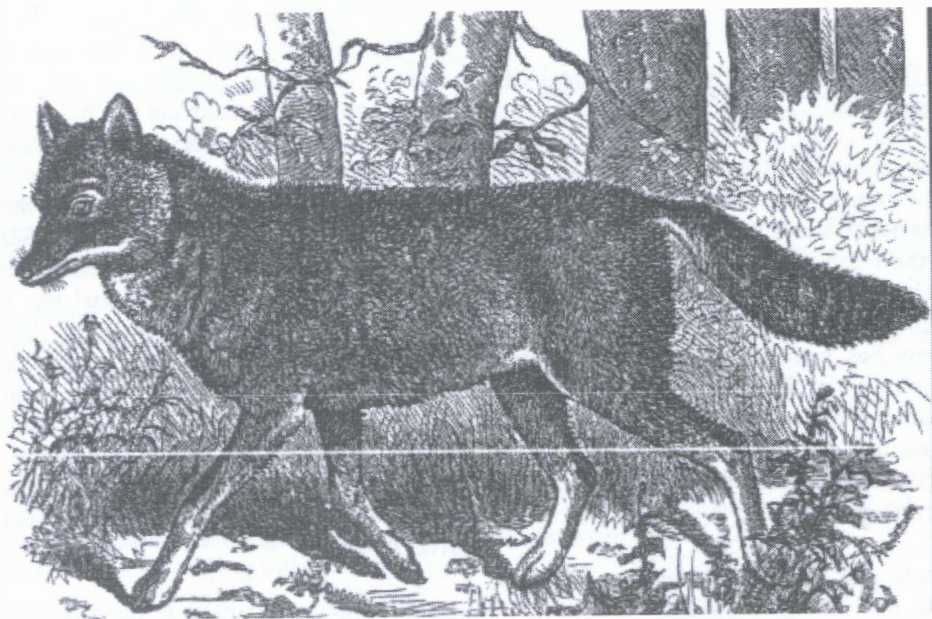
Several photographs of the animal have been taken. Mr Tosiaki Matsuhara took the first in 1978. He was a folklorist who had been investigating the legends of the lake. His pictures seem to show to individuals together. They are hump-backed and creating waves. The creatures have been christened *Issie*, much like Loch Ness's *Nessie* and have been seen by many respectable people including the president of a construction firm. This man, Yutaka Kawaji and 20 members of his family observed a black skinned animal showing some 6 to 9 meters of its body above the water. Mr Kawaji persuaded the animal in a motor boat, it dived and re-surfaced several times. *Issie's* description is a

familiar snake necked, humpbacked beast much like the Loch Ness monster.

Issie has counterparts in other areas of Japan; also on Kyushu, Lake Toya has reports of a similar beast. On Hokkaido island, Lake Kutcharo is the home of *Kussie* another monster for whom local citizens have formed a protection society.

(true god), and *Kami* (mountain god). Its skull was believed to ward off demons. There is a legend of a blind lute player who was lost in the mountains in a wild snow storm. He feared he was doomed but eventually met someone in the wilderness and was led down by what he thought was a hunter. Upon reaching his home he found it was a kindly shamanu.

The Shamanu: Japan's dwarf wolf.



The shamanu of Japanese wolf (*Canis lupus hodophilae*) was the smallest of all the wolves reaching only 41 inches in length. It was also the most distinctive of the wolves unequally marked with grey, white and russet fur. The Ainu people of northern Japan worshipped it and called it the howling god. Elsewhere it was known as *Okami* (great god), *Magami*

This changed with the coming of "civilisation". With deforestation, the introduction of firearms, and the spread of farming the shamanu's range began to shrink. Throughout the 19th century they were extensively hunted and the last one was supposedly killed near Washikaguchi on Honshu in 1905.

The whole sorry tale is strikingly reminiscent of that of the Tasmanian marsupial wolf or Thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) and like this animal the shamanu is rumoured to survive in remote areas and has been glimpsed many times since its supposed extinction. It would be a great triumph for both conservation and the Japanese nation if the howling gods could be proven to still haunt the mountains at the dawn of the 21st century.

A flat snake and a hairy fish : real life "pokemon!"

The Japanese video game Poket Monsters (pokemon) for short has become a runaway success both in its homeland and in the West. Players create their own small monsters each with unique powers and pit them against other players creations. The game has spawned an addictive Manga cartoon that follows a young pokemon trainer as he collects all 150 species. The made up monsters are fascinating, each with its own ecological niche (if some are a bit surreal!).

There are two small Japanese monsters that one could easily believe were the products of obsessive pokemon players, but apparently are based in reality.

The *tzuchinoko* is a snake that looks as if it has lost an altercation with a steam roller. Dorso-ventrally flattened (like a stingray) it bears horn like ridges, facial pits, and a well defined neck that is

narrower than the body. A dorsal ridge runs along its spine and a triangular head. It would seem to be an aberrant pit viper, perhaps one adapted for lurking in rock crevasses. There are several tortoise and lizard species adapted in this way. Known for centuries in Japan it only became known in the West as recently as 1987. A type specimen has yet to be procured by science.

Some antique manuscripts in Japan refer to a "hairy fish" (putting one in mind of the famous fur-bearing trout hoax). These peculiar picines were 4 to 5 feet long and covered with hair. Oddly for fish they would come out on land and gambol around making load noises. They were aggressive to humans, sometimes killing them but never eating the corpses. All in all these sound more like pinipeds than fish. Seals and sealions can deliver a powerful bite and one only has to look at an animal like the leopard seal to know it could easily kill a man. Perhaps a forgotten and possibly now extinct species of freshwater seal is being spoken of here. The small Baikal seal of Russia is land-locked and exists entirely in fresh water. Alternatively these writings could refer to a known species that swam up river in land.

We all know seals make it into Loch Ness and a leopard seal once was killed 48 kilometres up the Sholhaven river in Australia. If the measurements were correct, however, our Japanese seals would be a new species, the smallest ever known.

ESP in Animals: the Government Connection

by Nick Redfern.

The idea that elements of the United States Intelligence community have an active interest in determining the validity or otherwise of extra-sensory perception (ESP) in animals, sounds like something straight out of an episode of The X - Files. Just occasionally, however, truth is far stranger than fiction...

At various times since the early 1970s, the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) has been acutely aware of (and at times, highly alarmed by) purported advances in parapsychology on the part of the former Soviet Union. In addition, the DIA has produced a number of quite astonishing reports detailing its findings on (amongst other topics) telepathy; out-of-body experiences; remote viewing; psychokinesis; claims of teleportation; hypnotism; and much more.

Moreover, far from being an obscure agency of no particular merit, the DIA was created in 1961 by US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara and brought together the military intelligence branches of the US Army, Navy and Air Force. Currently, the DIA satisfies the foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence requirements of the Secretary of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, various components of the Department of Defence and provides the military intelligence contribution to national intelligence. In other words, the DIA is a highly-respected and vital component of the US Government; and with this in mind, let us turn our attention to the DIA's findings with respect to ESP research and the animal kingdom.

In a September 1975 paper titled 'Soviet and Czechoslovakian Parapsychology Research' made available to me via the US Government's Freedom of Information Act, the DIA reveals its findings on this fascinating area of research. Given its contents, I make no apologies for quoting the paper without deletion:

TELEPATHY IN ANIMALS.

Soviet and Czechoslovakian parapsychologists have not reported in animals in recent years; instead, they have emphasised research on biological energy transfer. Soviet parapsychology research is multi-disciplinary and indistinguishable from conventional Soviet physiological research. Both disciplines are presently involved in attempts to identify the sources of internally generated and externally imposed stimuli underlying physiological processes.

Soviet research on telepathy in animals in the 1920s and 1930s was devoted largely to proving that telepathy between man and animals did indeed exist. A good example of the early Soviet approach was research conducted by VIM. Bekhterev of Leningrad University, in collaboration with a circus performer, V.L. Durov. Bekhterev reported that Durov's trained dogs successfully solved arithmetic problems and identified or retrieved objects solely on the basis of their trainer's mental suggestion. The results of these tests were controversial, since the dog's performances were good when Durov was present and supplied the "suggestions", but deteriorated markedly when he was absent and another individual attempted to mentally control them.

Bekhterev's original objective was to demonstrate that telepathy between man and animals was mediated by some form of electromagnetic radiation (FMR), but by 1937, he and other Soviet parapsychologists had concluded that no known form of EMR was the carrier of thought transmission. The EMR theory of information transfer is still unresolved by the Soviets, but is still the major basis underlying much of their research.

In 1962 B.S. Kazhinskiy advanced the theory that animals are capable of visual and aural perception and reflex understanding of the behaviour of other animals or humans. He postulated that this ability resulted from the capacity of one animal to detect (via its nervous system), analyse, and synthesise signal-stimuli given off by another animal. According to Kazhinskiy, the signals were transmitted in the form of a "bioradiational sight ray" and analysed by the percipient animal as a result of its Pavlovian conditioning. The term "bioradiational rays" is still used by some Soviet and Czech parapsychologists to refer to focusing and concentration of biological energy by the brain and the optical neural channels.

Present day Soviet and Czech parapsychology research with animals is devoted almost exclusively to investigation of sources of biological energy involved in physiological processes, the interactions of such energy with external fields, and the effects of externally generated fields on animal physiology. Reference to telepathy in the sense of communications by transmission of total, conceptual, mental formulations is seldom made.

A significant advance toward identification of the EMR source of biological energy transfer was gained from recent research conducted at the University of Novosibirsk. Scientists there investigated the release of energy during cell division and during cellular damage and repair resulting from viral infection or toxic chemicals. In over 5000 experiments with cell cultures and animal organs it was shown that damaged cells radiated some form of energy and that the energy released was capable of causing damage in adjacent control preparations of organs or cells. Further investigation revealed that a uniform pattern, code, or rhythm of radiation was emitted by normal cells. This pattern was disturbed when cellular damage occurred, becoming quite irregular. It was also found that the patterns were transmitted from experimental to control preparations only when the cells or organs were cultured in quartz containers. Since quartz transmits ultraviolet (UV) radiation and standard laboratory glassware does not, the Soviets concluded that UV radiation mediated cellular information transfer. The researchers

subsequently correlated given irregularities of emission with specific diseases and are now attempting to develop techniques for diagnosis and therapy by monitoring and altering cellular radiation codes.

Czechoslovakian research on energy transfer between animal muscle preparations from animals to man, and from man to man, has also demonstrated EMR as the vehicle of biological energy transfer. In experiments conducted between 1948 and 1968 at the Okres Institute of Public Health, Kutna Hora, Czechoslovakia, Dr. Jiri Bradna demonstrated contactless transfer (myotransfer) of stimuli between frog neuromuscular preparations. Bradna placed identical preparations side by side; stimulation of one preparation with electric pulses at frequencies between 10 and 30 pulses per second caused contraction and a recorded electromyographic response in the other. In other experiments, stimulation of muscle preparations influenced the oscillations of a pendulum and increased the muscle tension of a human subject. Bradna obtained objective proof that energy in the very high frequency (vhf) range mediated the stimulus transmission. He also demonstrated that myotransfer could be blocked with ferrous metal filters and aluminium, could be deformed with magnets, ferrites and other conductors, could be reflected and transmitted over waveguides, and shielded with grids. Bradna concluded that primary perceptual and informational pathways between animals are based on metabolic processes at the macromolecular level and that the magnitude of energy transfer depends on muscular adenosine triphosphate (ATP) energy release.

Bradna has reported successful application of myotransfer in physiotherapy. It has been found to be effective for both individuals and groups. In the latter case, the summation of stimuli has been shown to enhance the neuromuscular responses of individuals within the group. Bradna feels that such stimuli influence the herd of animals and may also be a factor in altering human behaviour under conditions of isolation or overcrowding.

In the Soviet Union, Doctor Y.A. Kholodov has investigated the effects of a constant magnetic field (CMF) on rabbits. Whole-body exposures to fields between 30 and 2000 oersteds* resulted in nonspecific exchanges in the electroencephalogram

but no other directly measurable physiological responses. Kholodov showed that weak magnetic as well as other externally generated radiation fields have a direct effect on nerve tissue, and for this reason he feels that natural and artificial fields in man's environment may have an influence on health and behaviour via the nervous system and the hypothalamus. Kholodov's research is representative of current Soviet efforts to explain paranormal phenomena on the basis of known physical and biological parameters.

Another Soviet scientist, A.S. Presman, feels that biological energy and information exchange between living organisms is the result of electromagnetic field (ENF) interactions between individuals or between the individual and the environment. He and other Soviet scientists have recorded EMF's from man, frogs, and insects of various species at ranges from several centimetres to several metres from the body surface. The frequencies of the ENF's were found to correspond to various biorhythms of organs, rhythms of movement and acoustic signals and bioelectric rhythms. Presman thinks that in groups of animals, electromagnetic oscillations are synchronised by frequency matching and that the cumulative intensity may grow in proportion to the square of the number of individuals. Such cumulative emission is also thought to be possible as the result of synchronisation of the emissions of many cells in animals in a highly excited state.

Presman, like Kholodov, feels that the effects of sub-threshold stimuli are mediated through the hypothalamic region of the midbrain. The hypothalamus regulates diverse physiological processes in the organism (pulse, body temperature, oxygen consumption, carbon dioxide liberation, urine volume, urine nitrogen concentration, etc.) and these are the functions most commonly disturbed by changes in EMF's.

Presman believes that electromagnetic signalling is universal between animals, but not between humans who may have lost the capability for such communication as a result of evolution and the development of verbal and artificial communication channels. He does not rule out the possibility that "spontaneous telepathy" may occasionally occur, but regards such occurrences as rare cases of atavism. Consequently, he regards man as the

least suitable animal for studying electromagnetic communication.

It is important that the increased degree of sophistication which has occurred in Soviet ESP or telepathy research since 1960 be understood. At present the terms "ESP" and "telepathy" are seldom used. It is possible that the newer terms "biocommunication" and "psychotronics" will vanish in the near future only to be replaced by conventional high-energy physics terminology, or term such as "interpersonal subconscious reactions" or "mention" forces. In any event, the classical ESP experiments with animals are no longer of interest in the USSR. The typical Vasilev experimentation from 1920 to 1955 has been replaced with sophisticated research protocols which study complex interactions between man, animals and plants.

Dr. Pavel Naumov, who bears no relation to the now imprisoned Edward Naumov, conducted animal biocommunication studies between a submerged Soviet Navy submarine and a shore research station: these tests involved a mother rabbit and her newborn litter and occurred around 1956, three years prior to the USS Nautilus disclosure [Authors note: this is a reference to an ESP study allegedly undertaken by the US Navy in 1960].

According to Naumov, Soviet scientists placed the baby rabbits aboard the submarine. They kept the mother rabbit in a laboratory on shore where they implanted electrodes (EEG?) in her brain. When the submarine was submerged, assistants killed the rabbits one by one. At each precise moment of death, the mother rabbit's brain produced detectable and recordable reactions. As late as 1970 the precise protocol and results of this test described by Naumov were believed to be classified. Many examples can be found in Soviet literature with dogs, bears, birds, insects and fish in conjunction with basic psychotronic research. The Pavlov Institute in Moscow may have been involved in animal telepathy until 1970.

In essence, that is the document. Of course, the fact that it is now a quarter of a century old surely begs the question: at what level

is government knowledge of ESP in animals at in 1999...?

Nick Redfern is the author of a number of best-selling books, including 'A Covert

Agenda', 'The FBI Files' and 'Cosmic Crashes'. He also likes his booze and punk rock.

* Oersteds are a measure of the intensity of a magnetic field.

The Eternal Cat

Marcus Matthews

We associate lions with warm climates, though, in fact, they are perfectly at home even in the snow of our zoos and safari parks. We also know they were found throughout Pleistocene Europe even during periods of intense cold.

At this period there were actually several large cats, such as Owen's panther, the cave lion and the sabre-toothed lesser scimitar cat in Europe. The last allegedly became extinct 500,000 years ago, although it is depicted in later artefacts. The cave lion became extinct as recently as 40,000 ago. While lions are not commonly portrayed in cave-paintings, some are known, such as in the Cave de Trois Freres in France and the frieze of lions from the Cave de la Vache in the Ariege. One of the lions in this image possesses a well-defined disabled tuft, proving it is indeed a lion and not a cave-tiger as, at one time, palaeontologists believed.

It has been suggested that the lions depicted on the Assyrian monuments may actually have been cave lions, not lions as they were certainly in Europe much later. In 480 BC, according to Xenophon and Herodotus, lions in Greece attacked the baggage train of Xerxes, the Persian king.

A 6½ inch (16cm) statuette, found in a grotto at Isturitz in the Pyrenees has been dated to the Aurignacian culture, portrayed a creature with a

large head, short body, long, powerful limbs, a short tail and heavy, powerful lower jaw. On another fragment from Isturitz are the shoulders and head of another feline with an even deeper jaw.

Although the sabre-toothed tiger was believed to have died out at least 500,000 years ago, a 12,000 year old piece of Sythan goldwork portrays a struggle between hunters and a beast which resembles one. One reason why such creatures were hunted was for their skins which had been traded world-wide from earliest times. The oldest record of their use in clothing goes back to 6500BC. At the site of Catal Ilyuk in Turkey images of dancers wearing leopard skins have come to light.

They were probably being worn for ritual purposes, the wearers believing that the skin of the animal imparted to them something of its power, ferocity and agility. We certainly know that Aztec warriors dressed in jaguar pelts, while the Masai tribesmen of east Africa adopted the lion's mane as part of their costume and the fierce Dayak warriors of Sarawak donned the skins of clouded leopards when going into battle. There was widespread use of skins in China and elsewhere in the Far East. In Africa, chieftains used lion skins as a means of establishing authority over their subjects. But the skins were also thought to impart magical powers, for they were worn by witch-doctors in

Africa as well as by shamans in many countries.

However, the hunting of 'big game' became a pursuit of the ruling classes quite early on. Assyrian kings are portrayed pursuing lions from chariots, though it has been suggested their prey was actually bred in captivity to provide them with sport. The pharaoh, Amenophis III (1405-1367BC) was said to have killed over 100 lions during his 10-year reign.

The Roman also organised hunts, though here their aim was to provide live animals for the circus. A picture in a 300AD Roman villa at Bône in Algeria shows lions, leopards and cheetahs being driven into a stockade of netting reinforced with thorns. Meat or tethered live creatures such as goats, calves or dogs could be used as bait. Nets could also be dropped from trees or animals captured by the use of running nooses attached to heavy logs. Once it set its foot in the noose, it was pulled tight and movement impeded by the log which it had to drag with it. This made it easy prey for trappers.

The third century poet Oppian describes a methods of capturing leopards in which waterholes were drugged with strong wine. The stupefied animals were said lie down to sleep off a hangover, though it has to be said that there are many who believe that Oppian was making rather free with his poetic licence.

Once they had arrived in Rome or any of the other major cities of the empire, they would be prepared for arena. Here they could participate in spectacles which involved appalling cruelty, not only to the humans pitted against them, but also to other animals who would be goaded into fighting one another.

When not thus employed, these creatures formed part of menagerie, but the origins of these well pre-dated the Romans. The earliest recorded zoos were at Saqqara in Egypt and go back to 2500BC.

Ptolemy II (283-246BC) established a great menagerie at Alexandria, while a century earlier Alexander himself, after his conquests in India, had sent tigers back to home to be exhibited.

Despite - or perhaps because of - their fierceness, both lions and tigers became virtually royal fashion accessories. Ramses the Great had a lion he used in battle against the Hittites. Nero had a pet tiger he called Phoebe; Caligula lion called Acinares or 'Scimitar', and both Mark Antony and the Carthagian general Hanno had pet lions.

If the big, wild cats have repeatedly proved that they can be tamed, it was their smaller relative who developed into the domestic cat. And they had a very different history. By the third millennium BC the Egyptians were already using them to protect their grain stores from rodents. From 1600BC, on the evidence of tomb paintings and other records, the cat was forming part of home and family life. According to Peter Neville in *Do Cats Need Shrinks*, it is possible the formerly wild creature had undergone a genetic change, making it tolerant of humans.

Cats became so much an accepted part of the Egyptian family life that their passing was lamented in the same way as the passing of any other family member, their owners shaving off their eyebrows in the traditional sign of mourning. Cats were even embalmed like their human owners.

Several hundred thousand of them cats were found in central Egypt in the late nineteenth century and a cargo of 19.5 tons was brought to Liverpool. A few specimens went to the Natural History Museum and other collections, but the bulk were auctioned at between £3.50 and £4.25 per ton were sold to farmers for use as fertiliser.

Egypt may well have been the original cradle of the domestic cat, possibly resulting from the crossing of the Euro-African wild cat and the jungle cat.

Further hybridisation would have led to the emergence of the strains we now know, such as a long-haired so-called Persian, which may have resulted from a cross with the central Asian Pallas cat. Siamese cats share characteristics, such as voices, coats and characters, with the golden cat of south east Asia. Supremely graceful and elegant, they may well have enjoyed sacred status and would have been owned only by the priests and perhaps members of the aristocracy. Certainly the cat figures in Egyptian mythology where the villain Seth attempts to eat a divine cat in the presence of its mother Bastet.

Nearer home, in the British Isles, the lynx, a member of the cat family, and the Scottish wild cat were part of the native fauna. Remains found at an Iron Age site near Glastonbury in Somerset suggests cats may have been eaten, though in this connection we have evidence of a form of divination practised by the Iron Age Celts which involved chewing the flesh of, among other creatures, cats.

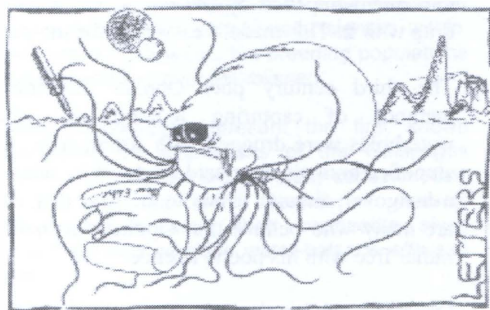
The domestic cat may possibly have been brought to Britain by Phoenician or Greek traders, but they were definitely present by Roman times. In the Roman town of Silchester, their footprints have left been on the soft clay of tiles which had been left out to dry, and the skull of a domestic cat was found in the remains of a villa which burnt down about 4BC.

There is little doubt that cats were to be found in many households. While the main reason for keeping them would have been to keep down vermin, it is also possible, as Miranda Green suggests, that they were also kept as pets. In any case, they were plainly highly regarded by the Celts, as is shown by such artefacts as a mid-fourth century BC a bronze,

coral-inlaid brooch from Czechoslovakia with a terminal in the form of a cat's head.

Of laws to protect them we have the first written evidence in the British Isles about 936AD in the laws of Hywel the Good, ruler of South Wales. These include the fine to be imposed for killing the cat which guards a royal barn. 'The animal's body is to be held downward by the tail with its head touching a clean, level floor. Wheat is then to be poured until the pile becomes so large that the tip of the upright tail disappears'.

The same document also provides a list of the points by which a cat is to be judged. It should be perfect in ear, eye, tail, teeth and claw. It should kill mice, not devour its young and 'should not be caterwauling every new moon'.



LETTERS

Dear Jon,

Hope all is well at CFZ.

Issue 19 was excellent, especially Neil Arnold's piece on Cobtree Manor which particularly interested me as someone who grew up in Kent. Another Kentish story surfaced

in the Guardian on 13/9/99, which you probably saw, but just in case:

Wild boar chases man up tree

A man took refuge up a tree when chased by a wild boar yesterday near Port Lympne wild animal park in Kent.

He called for help on his mobile. When police arrived the boar had gone but the man was still up the tree - shocked but uninjured.

Made me smile, anyway.

OK, no more mister nice guy - where are my copies of A&M no's 1 and 2? Graham managed to finally sort out all the other back issues, but I am still awaiting these two (and have been for quite a while). I think you were having problems getting them reprinted, but it would be nice to see them one of these days....

All the best,
David Sutton

Graham Inglis, deputy director of the CFZ and 'admin supremo' replies:

While things are generally fine at the CFZ, I admit that the books and magazines mail-out service has been pretty lousy all through 1999.

In part, Jon and I can blame pressure of work (*Quest* magazine work, etc) but administrative bungling has undoubtedly played a big part too.

We're determined to get things sorted soon - perhaps not yet to the extent of drawing up a charter of prompt service - but everyone still waiting for back issues, etc, should, we hope, see the orders filled before years' end. Apologies for all the delays.

See out website for updates! - Graham.

Crocodiles

Richard Freeman states in Issue 19 of this publication [letters page] that the *Crocodylus niloticus* dislikes salt water and would not have been able to reach the island of Rhodes unaided by boats. This species is recorded from coastal West Africa and one individual has been sighted 7 miles (11 km) from the Zululand coast. *C. niloticus* has in fact crossed to Zanzibar and Madagascar by crossing the sea and there is no reason that *C. niloticus* could not have reached Rhodes from the coast of the mainland. I suspect that *C. niloticus* has travelled further in the Mediterranean. Certain lake monster sightings from Italy have been likened to crocodiles and there is no reason why *C. niloticus* should not be a possible candidate for similar Mediterranean sightings.

Allan Edward Munro
Leigh, Lancashire

Richard Freeman, author of the letters page comment in question, replies:

The Madagascan crocodiles are a distinct sub-species who reached the island before its breakaway from Africa. The crocodiles that until recently inhabited other Indian ocean islands such as Mauritius have been found to be Indo-Pacific crocodiles. The West African specimens were probably washed out to sea by floods or storms.

The only species of crocodilians who habitually enter salt water are the Indo-Pacific and American crocodiles.

* * * * *

What's a-foot?

by
Richard Freeman

Well, we almost made it. The editorial team of Animals and Men nearly had its own T.V. show...

For the best part of two years the south west regional independent television company had been telling us that it was "99 percent" sure that our proposed show "Weird about the West" would be going into production. A few weeks ago Carlton television brought out Westcountry and all our hard work was tossed unceremoniously onto the scrap heap (doubtless in favor of some mindless swill for the brain-dead, that T.V.'s bottomless slop bucket of dross churns out unendingly these days).

There is a spark of light on the horizon however. In August we made a short film for H.T.V. They were so impressed that there is now talk of our own series! What was this film that caused such excitement? It was entitled:

The Brassknocker Hill Project

Regular readers will remember the beast of Brassknocker Hill, a simian creature that haunted the Bath area some 20 years ago. The sightings probably had their genesis in several baboons that had escaped from Longleat Safari park. We were perplexed when a production company approached us wanting to make a film on this subject. It had a fairly prosaic explanation, had occurred two decades ago, and most witnesses had moved away or died.

However, the film turned out to be nothing like we had envisioned.

We have done so many T.V shows that we have become quite blasé about them. Another documentary about some out of place beast? Run of the mill stuff - or so we thought.

The director, Damien Wild, recently returned from the U.S, decided to cash in on the success of the Blair Witch Project and made the film a "video diary" of our attempts to find the beast. So Jon, Graham, and myself, together with Phil Williams, a new addition to the team, trundled off to Bath to make our first fictional film.

Phil was used like a cross between a packhorse and a deep south cotton plantation slave, forced to carry all our equipment and luggage whilst being whipped and swore at by Jon. As a workshy, dole scrounging, soap dodger this was his lot. Graham looked like a particularly sleazy drug dealer with a blue suit, shades, and a suitcase. I more or less played myself, a roguish, dashing, gothic cryptozoologist. (Yeah, Right - Ed.)

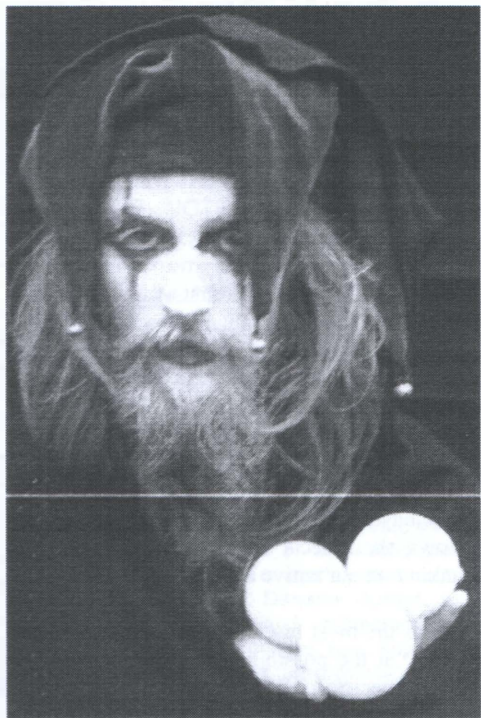
We had been "sent" a photograph of the beast, purporting that it had finally returned after 20 years. In fact this was me in a bigfoot mask hiding behind a bush. As we investigate we get picked off by the creature one by one, except Phil who becomes possessed by some forest elemental and changes into a fire wielding maniac jester.

The film features me trying to bait the beast out with peanuts whilst making various simian vocalisations through a megaphone, Jon acting (!?) like a pompous, insufferable bastard, and Phil descending into a yawning canyon of supernatural madness.

Is it really the beast that kills us, of the mad jester? Are the two in cahoots? Are they one of the same, a manifestation of the forest spirit?

God alone knows what the viewing public, expecting an investigative documentary, thought of these monkeyshines, but enough of them watched it to make the H.T.V. "big cheeses" interested.

Currently we are awaiting a meeting with the producer of the show to discuss a series. Watch this space... (to probably be informed that we were rejected in favor of "topless pensioner indoor bobsleighbing").



Phil Jester Williams

The Brassknocker Hill film was transmitted on HTV West on 21 Sep 1999 as part of the "Heads and Tails" series.

Book Reviews

by Richard Freeman

Fossil Remains of Mythical Creatures by Bob Slaughter

(Smilodoness books ISBN 0-9651349-0-3)

Bob Slaughter is a professional palaeontologist who came up with a novel idea, a book of bogus fossils belonging to creatures from folklore.

His idea is that legendary beasts are the inversion of extinct ones. With the latter we have the bones but not the information on there colour, behaviour etc. With the former we have a wealth of information on there lifestyle and appearance but no fossils to back them up. Ergo this book was born. Sounds great doesn't it?

The trouble is he chose some very mundane subjects. I was expecting spectacular dragon skeletons, fossil gryphons, giants and unicorns, but no, Slaughter's book is full of obscure and dull specimens. There are some nice fairies but the rest of the collection is frankly as dull as ditch water.

This is an A-1 example of a splendid idea appallingly executed. I only hope someone else tries this out and makes a better job of it.

Truly Weird: Real life cases of the Paranormal by Jenny Randles

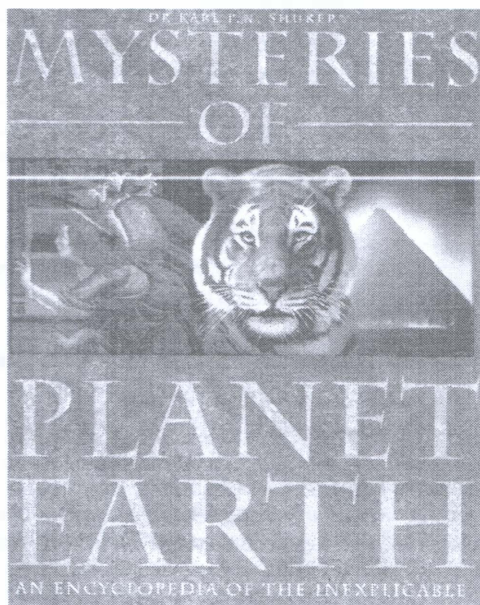
(Collins & Brown ISBN 1-85585-442-2)

Jenny Randles is a prolific writer, mainly known in the field of U.F.O logy. Here she has widened her scope to write about many Fortean subjects. This book is really a coffee table book for

those new to paranormal studies and as such is a fine introduction. Subjects tackled are as diverse as simulacra to poltergeists. She makes one minor error in describing the yeti as having white fur, in fact its fur ranges from reddish brown to black (one report on the Russian / Chinese border in the 50s spoke of white fur but this was seen by moonlight). This however is a minor gripe and the book is intelligently written with a fine level of scepticism. In the author's verdict section at the rear of the book she always approaches each subject from a rational view. A fine gift for a budding Fortean.

Mysteries of Planet Earth by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker (Carlton ISBN 1 85868 679 2)

Without a doubt, this must be the book of the year. Even before one opens the cover up the sheer quality of the publication grabs you. It is plush and impressive and the contents match the sleeve.



This is Karl's finest work since "The Lost Ark" and is crammed so damn full of new information you just don't know where to begin. I pride myself in cryptozoological knowledge but there's stuff in here I've never heard of. Earth hound, weird subterranean carnivores that burrow into graves to devour cadavers, the sandewan, a Zimbabwean entity who's calling-card is a constant trail of blood, giant blue eels in the Ganges, and legions more.

Reading this book I felt like a kid at Christmas unwrapping exciting new gifts of cryptozoological information. In short, if this book were a woman it would be Winona Ryder and if you don't buy it you are a southern shandy drinker.

The History of British Mammals

by Derek Yalden

(Poyser natural history ISBN 0-85661-110-7)

This remarkable book, the first of its kind in 117 years, charts the mammalian fauna of the British Isles from the primitive insectivores that scurried in the shadow of the dinosaurs to our modern day species.

The book comes into its own in the ice age with records of where the differing species of mega-fauna have been found. From glacial times it follows the effects of changing climate and mankind on our native mammals.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the book is its look at the possibility of returning formerly extinct species to Britain. Could the wolf, the bear, the wolverine, the lynx, the beaver, the bison, and the moose ever return to our land? The danger would surely be from us to them not vice-versa. The wild boar has already returned after two groups escaped in south east England 10 years ago and now a population of at least 200 live wild. It will be interesting to monitor the progress of this magnificent species. - RF

Psycho-Electrics: A theory offering rational explanations for paranormal phenomenaby John Ivimy
(Pen Press ISBN 1-9007-9606-06)

Although not all unexplained phenomena are covered by this book a surprising amount are looked on in a new light of a new theory. Ivimy's idea revolves around electro- magnetic currents that cause airplane crashes, U.F.O sightings and spontaneous human combustion. A group of air crashes in New York in 1951 are looked at in detail.

This book holds interest for the UFOlogist, the Earth mystery buff and the physicist.

Pen Press are a publishing company to watch, with many more Fortean titles. - RF

The Encyclopaedia of the Loch Ness Monster

by Paul Harrison

(Hale ISBN 0 7090 6461 6)

There have been enough books written on the Loch Ness Monster to fill Godzilla's rucksack but this one stands out as totally unique. I'm amazed someone has not come up with such an excellent idea before. Just about everything you could want to know about the monster is included in this humdinger of a book. Witnesses, experts, theories, investigators, locations; the whole shebang painstakingly cross referenced. Just thinking about the amount of work that went into this book gives you admiration for its author.

It does have a lack of illustrations and a couple of printing errors (240 foot basking shark? Surely he means 24 foot) but these do not detract from a truly wonderful book.

One thing puzzles him, why is Nessie referred to

as female. Well, I know the answer to that one Paul, so get in touch and I'll let you know... - RF

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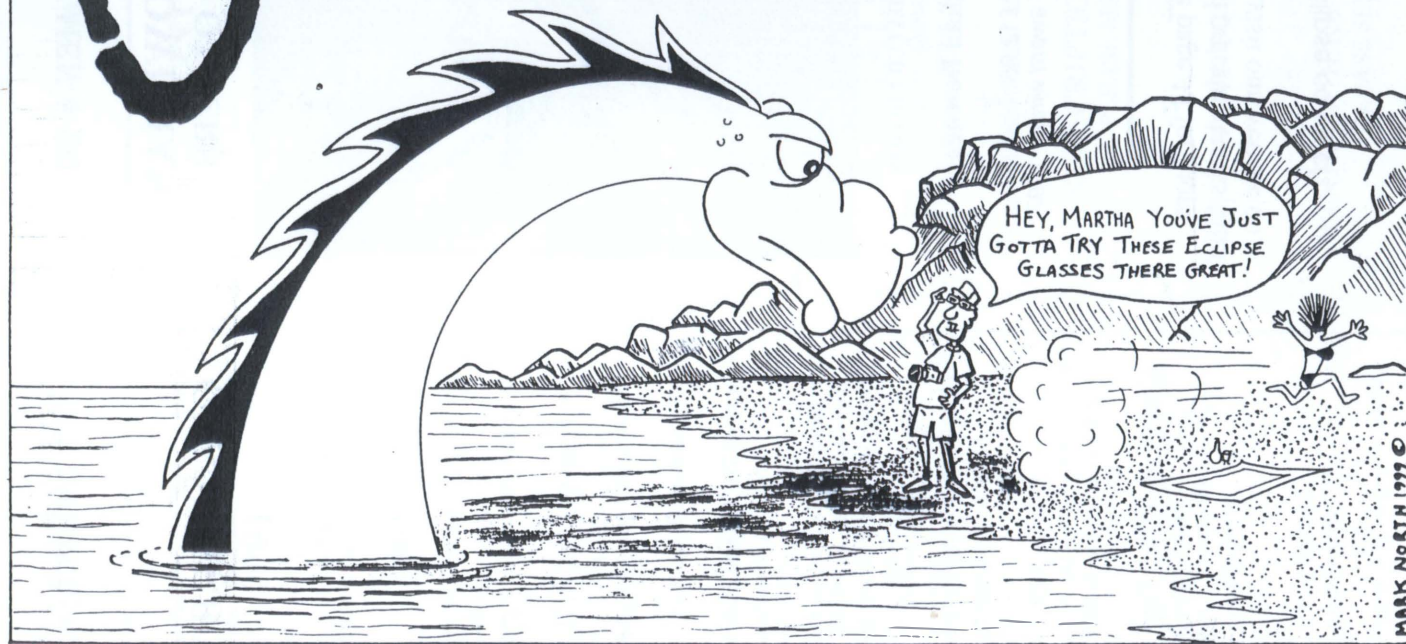
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RYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

by Mark North



LOCATION: Falmouth Bay, Cornwall, England
DATE: 11th August 1999
CASE: The Morgawr

*"At the eclipse of the sun
The monster will appear in broad daylight
Interpretations will differ
None will have forecast the great cost"*

Michel de Nostredame (1503-66)

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